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III

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE CHRISTIAN DEFENSE OF THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS AS A FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF THE GOSPELS

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PREFACE

The messiahship of Jesus was not accepted by all who heard the early Christian preacher. Despite his tireless zeal, the missionary was confronted by a sea of indifference and a tidal wave of strenuous opposition to his message about the religious significance of Jesus.

When we turn to second and early third century literature, we may recover the specific objections to Jesus as a divine being or as the Messiah which were current at the time those works were written. This study seeks to discover what objections to Jesus there were in the first century which impeded the missionary program of the early church. The gospels themselves tell us that specific accusations were made against Jesus in his lifetime. This study assumes the possibility, and the likelihood, that many second century aspersions against Jesus were in circulation in the latter half of the first century when the gospels were written, and likewise that most of the accusations against Jesus which the gospels record were circulating during the period of gospel formation. To at least some circles of the non-Christian world of the first century this new religion was as much a problem as it was to certain non-Christian groups in the second century. Therefore we may scarcely doubt that the advantage accruing to the opponents of the church from a direct attack on the life and character of Jesus was utilized by at least some of the first century opponents of Christianity just as it was by the church's second century opponents.

While we do not possess polemical works of the first century which were directed against Jesus and the church's Christology, and though we have no Christian works of the same period which were frankly Apologies, the possibility that the literature of the time was affected by the polemic going on over the significance of Jesus is worthy of investigation. This thesis undertakes such an investigation.

A part of the problem is to determine who were the chief antagonists of the church's claims for Jesus in the first century and what the reasons were for their attitudes. These matters are

dealt with in the first chapter.

The remainder of this study deals with specific attacks against Jesus as a figure of religious value. The charges against Jesus' historical life which are answered in the Christian Apologies of the second and early third centuries are exhibited, supplemented by such criticisms of him as are to be found in non-Christian sources of the second and third centuries. The gospels are then referred to in order to determine if the same slanders are reported to have been hurled against Jesus in his lifetime. Thereafter the first century Christian literature, particularly the four gospels and Acts, is studied to determine if any of the several writers were conscious of such criticisms in their day, and, if so, how they dealt with them. Especially when we find a portion of the Markan narrative which could easily have been the basis of a second century negative judgment against Jesus, altered by later gospel writers in a way which made their portrait of him much less liable to the same slander, we feel justified in concluding that the later evangelists often consciously shaped their materials toward a delineation of Jesus which elevated him above all honest criticism.

It is universally agreed among students of the New Testament and early church history that none of the gospels was written in the rarefied atmosphere of complete detachment from the church's contemporary problems and struggles. Form critics are also agreed that the individual pericopes which were to find inclusion in the gospels were subjected to environmental conditions and the contemporary needs of the church in the period when they circulated in oral form. Hence, if the church's preaching of Jesus met with open hostility, as we know it did, these materials were bound to be affected to some degree by the contemporary need of presenting Jesus in a fashion least likely to offend, and giving greatest promise of winning converts.

While it is true that we seldom venture to affirm categorically that a particular aspersion against Jesus was known to some or all of the gospel writers, yet we believe that a high degree of probability can often be established. Moreover, it is believed that the gospels can be shown to contain far more apologetic interest in freeing Jesus from attack than has been generally recognized. Trends appear with surprising consistency which give us renewed understanding as to why not one gospel, but many, were

written to depict the nature, message, and religious worth of Jesus.

It has been deemed best to employ the American Revised Version for the quotation of scripture passages throughout this study. R. H. Charles' Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament was used in quoting the Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books. The quotations from the Mishna are from Herbert Danby's translation into English. Goldschmidt's translation into German of the Babylonian Talmud and Schwab's translation into French of the Jerusalem Talmud were employed for the study of Talmudic sources. Thanks are due Dr. Samuel I. Feigin, Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures, of the University of Chicago, for his assistance in verifying many passages from the rabbinical literature which has not been translated into a modern language.

Especial thanks are due Professor Donald W. Riddle for his counsel and suggestions from the time this study was projected until its completion. My thanks are also due Dean Ernest Cadman Colwell for the suggestions as to method and procedure which were gained from a study of his book, John Defends the Gospel.

CONTENTS

Chapter — Page

I. THE OPPOSITION TO THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS 1

Gentiles Only Partially Concerned about the the Historic Jesus
The Jews Furnish the Chief Opposition
Rise of Disputations and Literature of Attack and Defense
Separation of Church and Synagogue
Controversy as a Factor in the Rise of Stories about Jesus

II. JESUS' LIFE WAS NOT UNMESSIANIC IN CHARACTER . . . 25

A. His Background Not Unworthy

Not Born out of Wedlock
The Problem of His Galilean Origin
The Problem of His Background as a Carpenter
The Problem of His Lack of Rabbinical Training

B. His Manner of Life Not Despicable

Not a Vagabond
Not a Sinner
The Problem of His Association with Despised Classes
Not a Coward

C. Was Not Rejected by Israel

Believers in Him Were Not Few
The Problem of His Family's Disbelief in Him
The Disciples Not Morally Inferior Men
The Disciples Not Cowards
The Problem of Judas

D. His Life Not Devoid of Messianic Signs

Scarcity of Signs in Jesus' Life
John the Baptist as a Sign
The Baptism of Jesus as a Sign
The Sign Furnished by Jesus' Prophetic Powers

CONTENTS, CONTINUED

Chapter — Page

E. Was Not an Inglorious Figure

Contrast between Jewish Messianic Expectations and Jesus' Life
The Christian Doctrine of Two Advents
The Johannine Single-Advent Delineation
Fluctuation of Belief in Imminence of the Second Advent

III. JESUS WAS NOT A DECEIVER 91

A. His Life Fully Prophesied

Christian Application of Rabbinical Methods to Scripture
Prodigious Use of Scripture to Prove Jesus' Messiahship
Jewish Objections to the Application of Scripture to Jesus
Use of Scripture in the Gospels and Acts

B. Was Not a False Messiah

False Jewish Messiahs of First and Second Centuries
Jesus Not One of the False Messiahs

C. Was Not a Sorcerer or Magician

Christians Regarded His Miracles as Evidences of His Messiahship
Magic and Wonder-workers Among the Jews
Jesus Not One of the Current Wonder-workers

IV. JESUS WAS NOT A REVOLUTIONARY. 130

Nature of the Jewish Attack

The Christian Defense

V. JESUS DID NOT PERISH IGNOBLY 145

The Church's Religious Interpretation of Jesus' Sufferings and Death

Jesus Did Not Die an Accursed Death

The Resurrection Not a Fraud

CONCLUSION 171

BIBLIOGRAPHY 177

CHAPTER I

THE OPPOSITION TO THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS

Despite the searching criticisms of the gospels in the past hundred years, not enough attention has been given to the life situations which gave rise to the gospel pericopes, which called for their alteration by later evangelists, and which brought forth the gospels themselves. While every scholar acknowledges that the stories about Jesus arose to answer practical needs in the life and activity of the early church, precisely what those needs were has too often been neglected. Moreover, scant attention has been paid to the audience to which the pericopes were addressed, either in their original or altered forms. Were the hearers (and later, the readers) Christians, Jews, gentiles who had been touched by the Jewish synagogue, or pagans? No one would seriously propose that the methods in use for converting gentiles were precisely the same as those required for converting Jews. In the modern world an intellectual gentile must be approached by other means than an orthodox Jew. Christian preachers and teachers of the ancient world were under the same necessity.

We possess ample evidence that the Jesus of history was under heavy attack in the second and subsequent centuries. The works which witness to this situation are principally the now lost Dialogue Between Jason and Papiscus, Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, Celsus' The True Word, Lucian of Samosata's Peregrinus Proteus, Porphyry's Against the Christians, Hierocles' Truth-Loving Words to the Christians, Arnobius' To the Heathen, and the Pseudo-Clementine Literature. And scattered through the Jewish rabbinical literature, dating from the early third century on, are a number of direct accusations against Jesus, and frequent veiled slanders against him, many of which originated in the first and second centuries.

What was the situation in the first century? Was the historical Jesus under attack then? It is true that no gentile or Jewish literature of the first century exists which clearly

reveals that such was the case. Nor were any Christian Apologies written in the first century, of which we have knowledge. But the absence of such literature is hardly decisive. Various factors played a part. To the gentiles of the first century Jesus was little known, and the religion which sprang up under his name was beneath their contempt, so much so that a literary attack against the church, or against Jesus, was out of the question. Jewish literature of the first century is scanty, and what there is was written before Jesus' religious significance was widespread (Philo), or was concerned only with the wild apocalyptic hopes of the time (the apocalypses), or was a history of the Jews as interpreted to the Romans (Josephus), in which an attack upon Jesus would be decidedly out of taste. The Christians of the first century had themselves made but a beginning in the production of a literature, chiefly because they anticipated the imminent return of Jesus as the glorious Messiah, and had not settled down to the staid attitudes of an established religious group.

When we examine the charges leveled against the historical Jesus which were made in the second century, we are led to conclude in almost every case that no valid barrier existed to prevent their origin and circulation in the first century. The gospels themselves record much opposition to Jesus in his lifetime. It may hardly be supposed that Jesus was spoken against during his lifetime, and again in the second century, but not in the remainder of the first century. Paul reveals that in the forties and fifties Jesus' crucifixion was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the gentiles,[1] and Matthew expressly says that the assertion that Jesus' body had been stolen by his disciples had a continuous history from the very beginning to the time of the composition of his gospel.[2] Moreover, the Talmud offers several items of a slanderous nature against Jesus which had their origin well within the first century.

Gentiles Only Partly Concerned about the Historic Jesus

This study recognizes that both Jews and gentiles found reasons to oppose the Christian proclamation of Jesus' messiahship and divinity. Here, however, we are concerned only with the types

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[1] I Cor. 1:23.

[2] Mt. 28:15.

of objections that the Jews, both Palestinian and diaspora, must have raised in the latter half of the first century, when the church was hard at work to bring God's people over en masse to the faith which it proclaimed. It is well to note that pagans do not appear to have criticized Jesus' earthly life as much or as often as they did the Christian movement itself. The criticisms were chiefly of a moral, social, and political nature. The Christians were accused of being an odious race, practicers of magic, guilty of unspeakable vices and infanticide, treason and atheism, political indifference to the welfare of the state, of jeopardizing the state's future by its ideals of chastity and continence, opposition to military service, indifference to parents and family, and unusual attitudes toward poverty and riches.[1] Athenagoras states that "three things are alleged against us: atheism, Thyestian feasts, Oedipodean intercourse."[2] Tertullian says, "We are accused of sacrilege and treason. This is the chief ground of charge against us--nay, it is the sum-total of our offending."[3]

One of the surest means of knowing what the specific charges of the pagans against the Christians were, is obtained by running through the apologists' works to find what in Christianity needed defending. We note that no serious defense of Jesus against the attack of gentiles appears until the third century, in a very limited way by Tertullian,[4] and in a fuller manner by Origen.[5] Not a line of the Apology of Aristides or the Epistle to Diognetus suggests the need of defending the historical life and character of Jesus. This holds also for the later apologetic works which were addressed to pagans: Justin's Apology, Discourse to the Greeks, and Hortatory Address to the Greeks; Tatian's Address to the Greeks; Theophilus' To Autolycus; Clement of Alexandria's Exhortation to the Heathen; Tertullian's Apology; and

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[1] H. Leclercq, "Accusations contre les Chrétiens," Dictionnaire d'Archeologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie, ed. Cabrol, Vol. I[1] (1907 -).

[2] Athenagoras A Plea for the Christians 3.

[3] Tertullian Apology 10. [4] Ibid., 21.

[5] Origen Against Celsus, Bks. 1, 11.

Minucius Felix' Octavius. Nor does any trace of serious pagan charges against Jesus' character appear in other types of literature of the second century, e.g., Ignatius, Polycarp, Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, the Shepherd of Hermas, Irenaeus, or the martyrologies.

Even so, some gentiles must have delighted in picking Jesus' life apart, for they ridiculed the idea that Jesus was more than a mere man, or that God could have a son.[1] But the Christian affirmation of Jesus' divinity did not call upon them to decide whether he was a heavenly being comformable to some pattern on which they had fixed their hope. They therefore treated the Christian doctrine as a contemptuous fable. Christianity had not yet become a sufficiently serious problem for paganism to demand a minute investigation of the records of Jesus' earthly life.

Occasionally certain gentiles also attacked the Jewish and Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and accordingly the Christian contention that Jesus had risen from the dead and had been seen alive.[2] Their opposition on this score was due to their disbelief in such an eschatology, which was purely Jewish. No criticism of Jesus was necessarily involved at this point, and so few pagans made a serious attempt to disprove Jesus from the records of his life, comparable to the Jewish effort in that direction.

Paul's letters show that not even his own gentile converts interested themselves primarily in the Galilean life of Jesus. We may be reasonably sure that Paul found little need of stories about Jesus aside from his death and resurrection when the apostle was at work among gentiles, else a few stories about his life would most certainly have crept into his letters. Among the gentiles of the first century there was little of the modern interest in Jesus as a historical personage who preached a moral and religious message. On the contrary, they were almost toally preoccupied with the risen Son of God.

The Jews Furnish the Chief Opposition

On the other hand, the Jews had every reason to attack the historical Jesus, for the religion centered in him produced

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[1]Tatian Address to the Greeks 21.

[2]Theophilus To Autolycus i. 13.

a situation which was fraught with the most serious dangers for Judaism, not only in the homeland, but among the dispersion. As the new sect developed it became increasingly heterodox from the orthodox Jewish point of view. The church's enormous efforts throughout the first century to convert all Jews to its doctrines threatened to split Judaism hopelessly, a danger which no other Jewish sect presented. As Jews, especially among the diaspora, drifted over to the new sect, it became necessary to proceed against this heresy arisen within Israel's ranks. It appears that many proselytes and God-fearers, too, were attracted to Christianity. It was apparent that one of the most effective means of attacking the new group was to pour ridicule on Jesus' life with a view to discrediting the Christian missionary's message.

The Christian writers uniformly ascribe the defamations of Jesus' life and character to the Jews.

> After his [Jesus'] time their madness still continued, and the name of the Lord was blasphemed by them, as saith the Scripture: 'Because of you my name is continually blasphemed among the nations': for from them did the blasphemy originate.[1]

> He, being despised by the people [the Jews], was, when preached by the apostles, believed on by the gentiles.[2]

The Jews "affirm that we err in receiving the Christ, who is already come."[3] In Tertullian's Apology, a work written to gentiles, only the Jews are said to have offered objection to the worship of Christ: "We worship God through Christ.....If the Jews object, we answer that Moses, who was but a man, taught them their religion."[4] In his work On Shows he definitely points out the Jews, in contrast to the pagans, as the ones who disparaged Jesus and spread lies about him.[5] In his book An Answer to the Jews he shows why Christians do not observe Torah, and that Jesus is the Christ of Jewish hope. But his works addressed to gentiles never dwell on either of these subjects. A pseudonymous work says the

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[1] Tertullian Against Marcion iii. 23.

[2] Epistle to Diognetus 11.

[3] Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 13.

[4] Tertullian Apology 21.

[5] Tertullian On Shows 30.

Jews are the ones who deny the cross as a means of salvation.[1] Commodianus says of them, "Ye with indurated heart insult him."[2] And Justin pleads, "Pour no ridicule on the Son of God; obey not the Pharisaic teachers, and scoff not at the King of Israel, as the rulers of your synagogues teach you to do after your prayers."[3]

The same state of affairs is revealed in the New Testament, indicating that the controversy with the Jews over Jesus arose early. Paul says, "They stumbled at the stone of stumbling."[4] "We preach a Messiah (Christ) crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Greeks foolishness."[5] The gospels tell us that Jesus was malignantly defamed in his lifetime: "Behold, how many things they accuse thee of."[6] Hebrews says, "Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself."[7] The Jews are the enemies of the gospel.[8] They "speak lies";[9] their "mouths must be stopped."[10] They accused Christians of following "cunningly devised fables."[11] To be sure, it was to the church's advantage in the second century to capitalize on the strong anti-semitism of the Graeco-Roman world by continually pointing to the Jews as the critics of Jesus. While Justin's Trypho was fictitious, still the criticisms raised in the Dialogue all turn on the problem of whether Jesus' life accorded with the Old Testament messianic predictions, and therefore they are primarily Jewish in interest, and only secondarily gentile. The criticisms of the gentile Celsus, found in the first two books of Origen's work, Against Celsus, are all introduced in the name of a Jew. Wernle thinks that Celsus was acquainted with a Jewish pamphlet filled with aspersions against Jesus, a work which he himself despised but none the less enjoyed making use of.[12] So long as Celsus is

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[1] Spurious Ep. of Ignatius to the Philippians 4.

[2] Commodianus Instructions 40. [3] Justin Dialogue 137.

[4] Rom. 9:33; cf. 11:7-10. [5] I Cor. 1:23.

[6] Mk. 15:4; Mt. 27:13. Cf. Lk. 23:10.

[7] Hebrews 12:3. [8] Rom. 11:28. [9] I Tim. 4:1-5.

[10] Titus 1:10-16. [11] II Peter 1:16.

[12] Paul Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity, trans. G. A. Bienemann (London: Williams and Norgate, 1903-04), II, 30 f.

engaged in refuting Jesus, he speaks in the name of this Jew. But when he goes on to criticize the church, its life, and its doctrines, he does so in his own name.[1] Therefore, even if by 160 Justin and Origen may have been writing with gentile objections more than Jewish in mind, because of the breakdown of the Christian mission among the Jews long before, we may consider the criticisms of Jesus recorded by them as essentially Jewish criticisms which had been taken up by gentiles in the second century.

The Christology of the church did not militate against religious ideas and institutions known in gentile circles, with the exception of emperor worship. Cults of dying and rising gods who mediated redemption to their devotees were exceedingly widespread and popular. Therefore it would hardly be the pagans who laboriously studied the records of the life of Jesus in order to discredit him as an object of worship, for Jesus was presented to them much after the pattern which had been set by the mysteries. But the developing Christology of the church struck like an axe at the roots of Judaism: (1) It discredited the Sadducees as religious leaders, for they had been chiefly responsible for Jesus' death.[2] (2) It increasingly fostered a type of attitude and worship which made the temple and the oral tradition of no importance. (3) It seemed to threaten the one dogma important to every Jew, monotheism. (4) It "perverted" the Jewish scriptures by finding Jesus and types of Jesus everywhere. (5) it threatened the Jewish nation's continuance as an exclusive and closed religious community by its easy requirements of gentile converts. Hence little imagination is required to understand why the Jews were violently opposed to the new sect, and tried to cut away the ground from under it by disproving the claims being made for Jesus. None of these points offered any occasion for gentile opposition, however. No gentile religious leaders had a hand in Jesus' death.

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[1] Origen Celsus Bks. iii-viii.

[2] Not only Christian books, but Jewish as well, place responsibility for Jesus' death on Jewish shoulders. "The Talmud knows nothing of an execution of Jesus by the Romans, but makes it solely the act of the Jews" (R. T. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash [London: Williams and Norgate, 1903], p. 86.

No pagan temple was threatened, and no gentile religious code of conduct was announced as now abrogated. There was no monotheism much worthy of the name in gentile circles. They were long accustomed to many religious systems and to many gods. Pagans freely selected the cults they would join and the gods with whom they would have fellowship, and they just as freely passed others by. If they did not affiliate with what to them was the "Christ Cult," that offered no compelling reason for attack on the historic personage of Jesus. But not so with the earnest Jew. There was but one God, Jahweh, and so but one true worship. All other "religions" were not such, but damnable idolatries. The church's Son of God could not be lightly accepted or rejected. Acceptance by a Jew brought with it a major revolution in his life. Rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God carried with it the obligation of rendering assistance in beating down this heresy risen from within Israel's ranks, that the faith of the fathers might be kept pure.

Moreover, Jesus Christ as a redemptive figure offered no offense to gentile popular thought. Redeemer gods there were aplenty. But the redemptive work of Jesus as preached by men like Paul was hard to square with the principles on which Judaism was founded, especially Pharisaism and Essenism. Such Jews would allow of no necessity of redemptive work beyond the individual's own efforts and attainments. If, as this new sect increasingly declared, men are not justified by keeping the law, but by grace mediated through faith in Jesus as the Christ, then the whole system of meticulous observance of Torah was nullified. And when Jesus came to be preached more and more as the divine sacrifice once and for all for the sins of mankind, the validity of the temple and its sacrifices was brought into question. No considerable segment of Jewish opinion could tolerate such a message. It is true, of course, that the Believers committed no crime by declaring their continued devotion to Jesus, and no danger to Jewish institutions was necessarily involved in their so doing. But as one tenet after another was added to the Christology of the church, with its attendant corollaries such as antinomianism, this became the apple of discord between the two groups, and finally forced their separation into rival religious bodies and systems.

The church's primitive preaching was above all else a messianic message. It proclaimed the imminent coming of the Messiah, whom it was able to identify as the former Jesus of

Nazareth by equating his life with Old Testament passages which were believed to point to that life and make the identity certain. At the beginning of Paul's missionary career he "received" a message which he delivered to his hearers everywhere he went, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures."[1] The new sect's preachers hastened all over Palestine with fear that the end would come before their message had been heard: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."[2] Unless these preachers were completely successful, or were ignored, controversy was bound to arise over their claims for Jesus. That they were not completely successful, and that their message was not ignored, is self-evident. Indeed, Justin tells us that the bad blood between the Jews and Christians was aroused solely over the question of Jesus' messiahship. The Jews "hate us who say that he has come, and who prove that, as was predicted, he was crucified by them."[3]

Bardenhewer says that the issue was joined as follows: "Had the Messiah appeared, then the turning-point of the divine economy of salvation had arrived, with its change from particularism to universalism. The new covenant had been put into effect, and the old abolished."[4] It was not a question of whether God were to send a personal representative to earth some time, for messianic hopes of such a nature were exceedingly strong in the first century and the first third of the second century. The messianic hope found expression in almost all the literature of the period, including that written by the Hellenistic Jews. II Maccabees, the Book of Baruch, and the Wisdom of Solomon make use of every opportunity to emphasize and strengthen this hope. There is no mention of it in the Palestinian Ben Sirach or Tobit, but it is found in Daniel, the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, Similitudes of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, Apocalypse of the Twelve Patriarchs, the third Sibylline Book, Psalms of Solomon, Apocalypse of Baruch, and IV Ezra. Even Philo entertained strong

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[1] I Cor. 15:3 f. [2] Mt. 10:23.

[3] Justin Apol. i. 36.

[4] Otto Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur (Freiburg: Herder, 1902-32), I, 180.

apocalyptic hopes.[1] Klausner argues that Hillel and Shammai had almost nothing to say about the messianic hope, judging by the items about them preserved in the Talmud.[2] But this is an inconclusive argument from silence, especially in view of the Talmud's being a work centuries later, at a time when the Jewish view of the Messiah was quite different from that which obtained in the first century.

According to the calendar in use among the Jews in the time of Jesus' life, the coming of the Messiah was expected around the middle of the first century A.D.[3] The destruction of the Temple in the year seventy did not put an end to these hopes, but revived them. The catastrophe was looked upon as an evidence that the Messianic age had begun, an age of suffering and trial, which was to continue for a few decades, whereafter the Messiah would appear.[4] Such books as Daniel, IV Ezra, and the Apocalypses were widely read and discussed. Almost every important Rabbi after 70 shared the messianic hope. The Kaddish was added at the close of the synagogue discourse, which was a prayer for the early coming of the Messiah.[5] The Jews, then, shared with the Christians the messianic hope, and did not object to the proclamation of the Messiah's imminent coming. But the divisive question was, Is Jesus of Nazareth this promised Messiah? "The Jews, too, were well aware that Christ was coming, as those to whom the prophets spake. Nay, even now his advent is expected by them; nor is there any other contention between them and us, than that they believe the advent has not yet occurred."[6] "Therefore upon this issue

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[1]Philo On Curses 11; On Rewards and Punishments 15-20.

[2]Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), p. 3.

[3]A. H. Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), pp. 16-18.

[4]Benediction 14 called for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the establishment of the throne of David. No. 15 was a prayer for the appearance of the messianic king: "The sprout of David they servant speedily cause thou to sprout up....for thy salvation we are hoping every day." Cf. E. G. Hirsch, "Shemoneh 'Esreh," Jew. Enc., Vol. XI.

[5]K. Kohler, "Kaddish," Jew. Enc., Vol. VII.

[6]Tertullian Apol. 21.

plant we foot to foot, whether the Christ who was constantly announced as to come be already come, or whether his coming be yet a subject of hope."[1] Again, the "substance" of the Jewish faith was "so to believe in One God as to refuse to reckon the Son besides him, and after the Son the Spirit. Now, what difference would there be between us and them, if there were not this distinction?" Tertullian then shows that this doctrine resulted in the antinomian convictions of the church, for "the Law and the Prophets lasted until John."[2] Celsus informs us that "there is nothing of importance in the investigations of the Jews and Christians: for both believe that it was predicted by the Divine Spirit that one was to come as a Saviour to the human race, but do not agree on the point whether the person predicted has actually come or not."[3] The Recognitions of Clement adds its testimony on this point:

> The Jews, therefore, have erred concerning the first coming of the Lord; and on this point alone there is disagreement between us and them. For they themselves know and expect that Christ shall come; but that he has already come in humility--even he who is called Jesus--they do not know.[4]

It was unthinkable to the Jews that the Messiah could have appeared on earth without being recognized by them and acclaimed as such. Celsus' Jew complains, "How should we who have made known to all men that there is to come from God one who is to punish the wicked, treat him with disregard when he came?"[5] But more than this: that the Messiah himself had been put to death by God's chosen people, at the instigation of God's chosen representatives, the high priests and the scribes, was beyond belief. There could be but one answer: Jesus could not have been the Messiah if he had died in such a manner. The Jews could not commit such a sin against their Messiah. Nor could God allow his Holy One to die a death which the Law says is a mark of accursedness of God.[6]

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[1] Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 7.

[2] Tertullian Against Praxeas 31.

[3] Origen Cels. iii. 1. Cf. iii. 4.

[4] The Recognition of Clement 1.50.

[5] Origen Cels. ii. 8. Cf. i. 52. [6] Deut. 21:23.

Moreover, none of the signs and events that were generally expected to precede the coming of the Messiah had occurred. What these would be are indicated in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, and are found also in the synoptic gospels.[1] Nor had the popularly expected work of the Messiah been accomplished by Jesus in his lifetime. These included the political restoration of Judea, either with a king of the Davidic line, or as a purely theocratic state. The old borders of the kingdom of the days of David and Solomon would be restored. Rome not only would be driven from Palestine, but itself would be destroyed. Some envisioned even the slaying of the last Roman emperor by the Messiah himself.[2] There were Jews who believed that the Law would be abolished or altered when the Messiah came.[3] Neither had this taken place in Jesus' lifetime.

Rise of Disputations and Literature of Attack and Defense

With regard to literary productions arising over the controversy about Jesus' messiahship, Goodenough remarks:

> We have ample evidence that written disputes with the Jews and diatribes against them were in existence long before Justin's time, and the Dialogue of Justin seems a compilation of material from such documents, one of which might well have been a written account of the teachings of the Jewish Rabbis by a converted Rabbi, or possibly a Rabbinical anti-Christian tract.[4]

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[1] Mk. 13:4-27; Mt. 24:3-31; Lk. 21:7-28. Yet whenever the Jews are said to have asked for a sign from Jesus that he is the Messiah, it is indignantly refused: Mk. 8:11; Mt. 12:38; 16:1; Lk. 11:16. The same request in the Fourth Gospel, however, is met with an attempt to provide a sign (2:18; 6:30). That these requests for a sign refer not only to Jesus' lifetime, but also to the decades following, is indicated by Paul: "The Jews ask for signs" (I. Cor. 1:22).

[2] Sibylline Oracles iii. 652-66; Psalms of Solomon 17; Apoc. of Baruch 29:3; 39:5-40:3; 72-73:4 (30:1 is a Christian interpolation). Cf. R. T. Herford, Judaism in the New Testament Period (London: The Lindsey Press, 1928), pp. 110-12; M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings (New York: Harpers, 1938), p. 141.

[3] Jer. 31:31; 32:40; 33:14; Ez. 37:26; Zadokite Work 8:15; 9:28, 37; Yalkut on Isa. 42:9. Cf. S. W. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), I, 228.

[4] E. R. Goodenough, The Theology of Justin Martyr (Jena: Verlag Frommansche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 96.

The earliest such controversial book of which we have knowledge, however, was the Dialogue Between Jason and Papiscus, now lost.[1] Evidence of later verbal or written disputations is to be found in a number of places.[2] Pfleiderer thinks that the controversy over the historical Jesus completely disappeared by 150 A.D. when the Fourth Gospel became widely circulated.[3] But against this opinion is the statement of Tertullian that a colloquy took place "very recently";[4] and Origen's remark that "Jesus is at all times assailed by false witnesses, and, while wickedness remains in the world, is ever exposed to accusation."[5] In Jerome's day, too, controversy between Christians and Jews continued. He says that the Jews have an inordinate love of religious disputation, and are distressed if there is no opportunity of slandering and ridiculing Christians.[6] It was considered in his time a worthy undertaking to enter into polemic against the Jews.[7] The discussions were described as regular combats: "Ut cum Judaeis conferamus pedem....contentioso fune."[8] Jerome says that on the Jewish side the efforts put forth were most appalling![9] Much of the debate often centered on the Jewish insistence that the Christian

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[1]Harnack thought he discovered this work in a slightly modified form in the fifth century Altercatio Simonis et Theophili (A. Harnack, Die Altercatio Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani, Vol. I of Texte und Untersuchungen ed. O. Gebhardt and A. Harnack [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1883], Sec. III, pp. 1-136). But P. Corssen (Die Altercatio Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani auf Ihre Quellen [Jever: Mattcker Verlag, 1890] and Theodore Zahn (Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons [Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1891], IV, 308-29) showed this thesis to be without sufficient basis. Harnack himself soon after gave up the idea (Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893], I,95).

[2]Justin Dial. 50, 115; Origen Cels. i. 48; i. 71; iv. 23; iii. 1; L. Ginzberg, "Akiba Ben Joseph," Jew. Enc. Vol. I.

[3]Otto Pfleiderer, Primitive Christianity, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Williams and Norgate, 1911), IV, 496-99.

[4]Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews 1.

[5]Origen Cels. i. preface.

[6]Jerome In Isaiah 7:14 (Migne Latin Series, Vol. XXIV, col. 110).

[7]Jerome Preface in the Book of Psalms (Migne Latin Series, Vol. XXVIII, col. 1186).

[8]Jerome In Isaiah 7:14 (Migne Latin Series, Vol. XXIV, col. 110).

[9]Jerome Epistle to Titus iii. 9.

copies of the Old Testament were erroneous, and therefore could not be used to prove Jesus as the Christ.[1]

Discussions between Rabbis and Judeo-Christians on Palestinian soil also took place.[2] But here they were of less violent a nature, at least until after the temple had been destroyed, for the Palestinian Believers appear to have taken a middle-of-the-road position, attempting to act as intermediary between the two great wings of opposition: the unconvinced Jews and the extra-Palestinian churches. After 70, however, continuance of this role as peacemaker became increasingly impossible of fulfillment, and the Judeo-Christians were forced out of the synagogue into the church, or back into Judaism, or into the inconsequential little sect called the Ebionites, to be despised and rejected both by the church and the synagogue.

In the foregoing pages it has been pointed out that opposition to the Jesus of history was in the main a Jewish and not a gentile concern, and that it appeared very early, if not from the beginning. The reasons why the Jews were opposed to the new sect have been indicated. Their displeasure with the new sect in every case had its growing Christology as its ultimate cause. If these conclusions are correct, it is likely that such opposition and disputations produced a situation for the church of such a kind that its inner life and its literature were bound to be affected. As the church slowly withdrew from the synagogue, a period of great rivalry for the support of the masses ensued. The church strove with every means at its disposal to win the Jews to an acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, and to an ethic preparatory to the glorious coming of the Messiah and the end of the age. Moreover, it attempted to reach the God-fearers and pagans who already had been under the influence of the synagogue in the gentile cities. Official Judaism fought back, and with considerable success induced many Jews to return to orthodoxy,[3] so that Christianity finally became for all practical purposes a religion of gentiles.

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[1] S. Krauss, "The Jews in the Works of the Church Fathers," Part III, Jewish Quarterly Review, VI (1893-94), 239.

[2] Sanhedrin 39a, b.

[3] Mk. 4:16 f; Jn. 6:60-66; Heb. 6:4-8; 10:39; Justin Dial. 47.

Separation of Church and Synagogue

When Paul wrote his epistles the church and synagogue had not yet become separated, excepting possibly in Rome. Christianity was still one of Judaism's sects, albeit an increasingly unpopular one with the authorities. The authorities persecuted it constantly, judging by the very numerous references to such activity scattered through all Christian literature from Paul to Justin. All Jewish Christians were called Minim, "heretics," guilty of minuth, "heresy." They caused the Jews grave concern, as is illustrated in the story of Joshua ben Hananiah's death. All his life he had fought "Minuth" with great vigor, and when the scholars were standing around his bed they mourned, saying, "How shall we maintain ourselves against the unbelievers?"[1] Dire threats were made that those who went over to this heresy would be eternally lost. "R. Eleazar the Modiite [80-135 A.D.] said: He who profanes holy things and despises festivals, and shames his associates in public, and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father, and gives interpretations of Torah which are not according to Halachah, even though he possess Torah and good deeds he has no portion in the world to come."[2] The academy at Jamnia during the presidency of Gamaliel II specifically excluded "the gospel (euangelion)" and the books of the sectarians or heretics.[3] Christian books were to be destroyed, as R. Tarfon had done,[4] who lived in the period between 70 and 135. R. Akiba (d. 132) taught that "he that reads the heretical books" will have no share in the world to come."[5] Jewish leaders even in the first century drove Christians from the synagogues,[6] and increasingly enjoined the people to have nothing to do with Christians, and to refuse an ear to their arguments.[7] Such odium was attached even to speaking

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[1] Hag. 5 b; cf. W. Bacher, "Joshua b. Hananiah," Jew Enc., Vol. VII.

[2] Pirke Aboth III, 12. Cf. Pirke Aboth V, 19; Sanhedrin X, 2; T. Sanhedrin XIII, 4 f; Gittin 56b-57a; Shemoth R. XIX, 4, p.36d.

[3] Yadaim IV, 6; T. Yadaim II, 13. Cf. T. Shabb. XIII, 5; G. F. Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), I, 87.

[4] T. Shabb. XIII, 5; Shabb. 116a. [5] Sanh. X, 1.

[6] Jn. 16:2. [7] Justin Dial. 38; 112.

with a Min that occasionally even noted Rabbis were arrested on suspicion of Minuth after being seen talking to a Min.[1] Justin complains of how greatly the Jews hated Christians,[2] and this is borne out in items preserved in the Talmud. R. Tarfon is quoted as saying that when fleeing he would rather enter the house of an idolater than that of a Min.[3] Meat found in the hand of a gentile may be used, but not that found in the hand of a Min.[4] Gentiles are neither to be cast into a pit nor helped out; Minim, apostates, and betrayers are to be cast in and not helped out.[5]

Controversy as a Factor in the Rise of Stories about Jesus

When Paul wrote his letters, which were addressed to churches largely of gentile membership, he evidently regarded Jesus' earthly life before his passion and death of no great importance as an aid to building up the faith of his readers. On one occasion he goes so far as to write, "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet know we him so no more."[6] Rather, he fixed the gaze of himself and his converts upon the crucified and risen Lord. The historic Jesus finds most scanty mention in his letters. The only items are the following: Jesus was born of a woman, under the law, in the fulness of time;[7] he was humble;[8] obedient;[9] forgetful of self;[10] meek and reasonable;[11] and loving.[12] There are only four words or teachings of Jesus: the wife should not leave her husband;[13] they that proclaim the gospel should live by the gospel;[14] the living will not precede the dead, but when the Messiah comes from heaven the dead will rise first, and then the living will be caught up with them to meet the Messiah in the

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[1] T. Hullin II, 24; Abodah Zarah 16b, 17a.

[2] Justin Apol. 1. 36. [3] T. Shabb. XIII, 5.

[4] T. Hull. II, 20 f. [5] T. Baba Metzia II, 33; Ab. Zar. 26a,b.

[6] II Cor. 5:16. [7] Gal. 4:4 f. [8] Phil. 2:6.

[9] Rom 5:19. [10] II Cor. 8:9; Rom. 15:3.

[11] II Cor. 10:1-3. [12] II Cor. 5:14; Rom. 8:37; Eph. 3:19.

[13] I Cor. 7:10; cf. Mk. 10:2-4.

[14] I Cor. 9:14; cf. Mk. 10:10.

air;[1] and the report of Jesus' actions and words at the institution of the Lord's Supper.[2] That this is the sum total of the references to the historical Jesus in a series of letters filled with hundreds of references to Christ Jesus, shows how little the Jesus before the crucifixion loomed in importance in the time and locale of Paul.

Why, then, did the individual stories about Jesus arise, many of which later were incorporated into the gospels?[3] To whom, and for what purpose were they told? These questions have not been fully and satisfactorily answered. In view of the fact that Paul used no stories in his letters, which were "adapted to be read loud to the congregation, and so made accessible to all members,"[4] and therefore served a function analogous to that of the sermon; and in view of the fact that the sermons in the first chapters of Acts show no use of such stories, we are faced with the

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[1]I Thess. 4:15-17. This passage was evidently used to correct an inherited apocalyptic conception, as found in IV Ezra 13:24.

[2]I Cor. 11:23-25.

[3]In this study we recognize the atomistic character of the synoptic gospels, as form criticism has pointed out in recent years. In the main each story about Jesus or saying of his was originally self-contained, and only after the publication of blocks of such pericopes, and later gospels, did the individual pericopes enter into a relationship with the preceding or following item. The one exception to this is the Passion story, but it is possible that even here there may have been no intrinsic relation of the several items until they were brought together by some early teacher or preacher. The self-contained nature of the gospel pericopes has been fully discussed by Karl L. Schmidt, Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1919), and Martin Dibelius, Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1919); English translation, trans. B. L. Woolf, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935).

It is of course true that the gospel writers brought the stories of Jesus into relationships which they did not originally have. This is evident by examining the Lukan parallels to Matthew's sermon on the mount. They are scattered in Luke 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 16. Other examples: Mt. 9:35-10:42 is scattered in Mk. 3, 6, and 13, and in Lk. 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, and 21. Lk. 10:1-27 is scattered in Mk. 6, 12, and 16, and in Mt. 9, 10, 11, 13, and 22. Lk. 12:1-12 is scattered in Mk. 3, 8, and 13, and in Mt. 10, 12, and 16.

K. L. Schmidt points out, "But on the whole there is no life of Jesus in the sense of a developing life story (Lebensgeschichte), no chronological sketch of the story of Jesus, but only isolated stories, pericopes, which are placed in a framework" (K. L. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 317).

[4]Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1935), p. 14.

problem of their rise. Form criticism of the Dibelius variety speaks repeatedly of the "Sitz im Leben" of the several classes of pericopes. But the life situation calling forth and circulating the stories is viewed from the side of Christian affirmation to the neglect of the position of the church in the midst of serious and determined anti-Christian propaganda. Form criticism fixed its gaze so intently on forms of a literary or non-literary kind that it tends to lose the historical sense: the ultimate goal behind Christian preaching; the state of mind of the Jewish hearers; the prejudices and vilifications of the adversaries of the gospel; and the difficulties of holding converts already won, because of the strength of the Jewish counter-attack against the proclamation of Jesus' messiahship. The gospel stories were not the products of a serene and unruffled long-range missionary program, but were in many instances the weapons forged for battle: the battle against indifference to the call of repentance in preparation for the end of the age, and the battle against the opposition to the messiahship of Jesus. It was not a quiet world in which the primitive missionaries operated. The Christian missionaries were not well-fed men of God who went about their duties perfunctorily and without haste. On the contrary, they worked with indefatigible zeal, that they might save as many men as they could before the messianic day arrived, and that they might overcome the unexpected hostility of the Jews whom they at one time had expected would enter the movement en masse. They put the greatest pressure on the Jews to take a stand for Jesus: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."[1] They were under a divine compulsion: "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."[2] Many of them turned to the vast ocean of gentile souls, that they too, as many as were called, might be saved The church was as missionary as it could be, and left no stone unturned to gain for Christ every single soul that it could persuade.

In the midst of such a situation the gospel materials were formulated and circulated. In a like situation, after the destruction of the temple, which gave added impetus to the messianic hopes, the synoptics were composed of these earlier materials. A church so conscious of its divine calling could hardly produce anything, oral or written, which was not related to its missionary responsibility. Dibelius fully recognizes the use

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[1]Mt. 12:30; Lk.11:23. [2]I Cor. 9:16.

of these materials in preaching, but fails to give full consideration to the force of the Jewish prejudice against Jesus with which the Christian preacher was faced, for he writes,

> Whether in making these converts we are dealing with the Jewish or the Gentile mission is not the first question. For this way of stating the question raises a false issue when we are dealing with the progress of the mission where in all probability the most important and the most frequent question was that of winning the proselytes and the "God-fearers," i. e., men who either altogether or to some extent had passed over from paganism to Judaism. In missionary work Jews, Gentiles, and proselytes, needed some description and application of what was known about Jesus. The same was also necessary when it was a matter of building up and confirming the churches. Moreover in the course of worship "sermons" were delivered to the Christians who had already been won.[1]

This passage shows that Dibelius sees no necessity of distinguishing between the type of message needed to win Jews, and the approach necessary to convert pagans. Moreover, it implies a quiet missionary program, unharassed by violent opposition, for which stories about Jews were furnished simply because Jews, gentiles, and proselytes "needed some description and application of what was known about Jesus." The only other reason that he gives for the rise of these stories was for "building up and confirming the churches." Every one of the references to their "Sitz im Leben" made by Dibelius fails to indicate an appreciation of the terrible stress under which the church was working.

If the stories about Jesus were told only to inform converts of Jesus, about whom they had known little or nothing before, and in a situation unruffled by hostility and violent countermeasures on the part of the Jewish synagogue leaders, there is no explaining the scores of passages in first and second century literature up to 150 pertaining to the persecutions to which they were subjected by the Jewish authorities, and to the hatred which they felt. Nor is there left a way to account for the almost complete failure of the Christian mission to the Jews, which was its first and primary interest until the time came that the hope of winning the Jews had faded. By 100 almost all Jews had returned to orthodoxy, and they had forced the church out of Judaism. It was no longer Jewish. Its membership and its appeal were gentile.

There was a history of the struggle of the Christians to

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[1] Dibelius, op. cit., p. 14.

convert the Jews, not only in Palestine, but everywhere where Jews were to be found. Its period was largely from 50 to 90 or 100 A.D. Though we possess no books either from Christian or Jewish hands which have recorded that struggle, this is no proof that a violent upheaval of all Jewry did not take place before the church was finally disgorged. The gospels and most of their materials in the form we know them were composed in this period, as were Galatians and Romans. It is proper, therefore, for us to examine these documents to see what they reflect of the great conflict. The Jewish question, and Christianity's place within Judaism, dominate them all.

Other form critics, however, do recognize the apologetic and polemic motifs in a great number of the gospel materials, and that a distinction must be made between Jewish and gentile attitudes to the Christian missionary. Albertz says,

> Where did the narration of the controversial discourses (Streitgespräche) find its fixed place within the historical life? The answer can only be in the community's meetings of Christian believers who had been won from Judaism. Situations which point to heathen Christians and their problems are absent; moreover, the question of the mission to the heathen with its consequences for the attitude to the Law is as yet untouched upon. Jewish customs are presumed to be familiar. It was the oldest community in which these stories circulated.[1]

He also tells us that "it was always effective to repel objections which arose from without with these stories."[2] He says in addition,

> So the controversial discourses come to the assistance of apologetic, but not for the purpose of driving the opponents of the Christian faith from the field with these stories. There is nothing in them which points to such an aggressive use. But it is the case that they enabled the Believers themselves to refute in their Christian consciences the objections which the opponents raised.[3]

K. L. Schmidt points out that the early communities had apologetic as well as religious and missionary interests which found their way into the pericopes.[4] Bultmann stresses the point even more. He states that the Streitgespräche found their fixed place in the life of the church in order to serve the apologetic and polemic

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[1]Martin Albertz, Die synoptischen Streitgespräche (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1921), pp. 100 f.

[2]Ibid., p. 99.

[3]Ibid., pp. 98 f.

[4]Schmidt, op. cit., p. 317.

needs of the Palestinian community.[1] He finds six chief motives for the Passion History: (1) the establishment of proof of Jesus' messiahship from prophecy; (2) apologetic needs; (3) the need of Novellen, paraenetic purposes; (5) dogmatic motives; and (6) cultic motives.[2] It is clear that the apologetic motive is not confined to one of these six, but is also present in the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth. Bultmann's opinion is much the same regarding the early groupings of stories about Jesus and sayings of his into collections. "The collection of the traditional materials began in the primitive Palestinian community. Apologetic and polemic led to the collection and output of apophthegmatic items."[3] But this recognition of the apologetic and polemic needs of the early Palestinian communities is not accompanied by an indication of what the specific prejudices and charges of Jewish orthodoxy were against the new sect and its doctrines.[4]

This study follows in the main the view of Albertz that the gospel materials were primarily called into being to serve the needs of the believers already won or in the process of conversion. This also applies to the written gospels. They may scarcely be imagined as pamphlets designed to minimize official Roman hostility to the new religion. On the contrary, they were written for the purpose of gaining converts to Jesus and the cult gathered around his name, and for holding those already won who were often subjected to ridicule for their faith in Jesus. The writers, especially Matthew and Luke, as we shall see, though they composed their gospels in Greek, were extremely sensitive to all adverse judgments of Jesus, which had emanated originally from Jewish propaganda against Christianity. Through its synagogues, which dotted the empire everywhere, the channel was provided for disseminating among God-fearers and even pagans an effective propaganda against the church and its Christ. And so the old Palestinian struggle was carried into the Graeco-Roman world, with an accompanying widening of the front as the Jews fought vigorously against the delineation of Jesus which was given to the disapora Jews and the gentiles, and Judaism sought

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[1] Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931), 2d ed., p. 41.

[2] Ibid., pp. 303-08. [3] Ibid., p. 393.

[4] Ibid., pp. 304 f.

to enlist gentile opposition to the church to reinforce its own. It is natural to look to the Jews, and not to the gentiles, as the initiators of most of the aspersions against Jesus, and the church always defended him from Jewish, not gentile, attack. This does not imply that gentiles found no reasons for attempting to depreciate Jesus, but means that the Jews were the natural enemies of the church's Christology, not the gentiles. If this were not so, Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect, rather than evolve as a gentile religion.

As was indicated in the discussion above, the Jews opposed the church at three main points. (1) Jesus was not the Messiah, for neither was his life of messianic type and quality, nor did he bring about the accomplishments that scripture and tradition said the Messiah would do. (2) The church's Christology, especially as it was formulated for gentiles (to whom the term Messiah or Christ was meaningless), made of Jesus another God, according to the Jews. Therefore the Christians worshipped two Gods, in the face of repeated divine revelations that there is but one God. (3) The church's mission to the gentiles became increasingly antinomian in character (for obviously the Christian missionary had no chance of winning many gentiles if they were required to become Jews and adopt Jewish religious and social customs), and without warrant or authority it let down the bars and received non-Jews into its fellowship without requiring the observance of the time-honored rules for the reception of gentiles into the Jewish nation.

This study confines itself to the first of these three Jewish objections to the church. The second was not alive at an early date. Paul's Christology does not appear to have given offense to the Jews, for nowhere does he defend it. At all events, Paul himself assumed that his conception of Jesus as the Christ was well within Judaism. By the time of the composition of the Fourth Gospel, however, the issue had appeared, for a strong reflection of the contention that the church had two Gods is present.[1] The synoptics, however, do not seem to betray as strongly a consciousness of such a charge at the time they were written, unless it be found in the charge of blasphemy because Jesus forgave

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[1]John 10:30, 33-36, 38. Cf. 5:18.

sins,[1] and the condemnation for blasphemy in the trial before Pilate.[2] In this case, we can only regard the accusation of two Gods as ideally made against Jesus in his lifetime. These two stories are really a criticism not of Jesus and his teaching about himself, but of the church's Christology. Else there would be no explanation of the Markan emphasis on how Jesus sought to keep his relationship to God a secret, and no accounting for the toleration with which the Believers were received in the first decade of their organization, and for some time thereafter, especially in Palestine. But the second century literature is filled with references to the scandal caused among the Jews because the Christians had apostasized from monotheism. To be sure, the Jews themselves had come perilously close to positing a second God in the Old Testament. But

> Neither the Memra of the Targums, nor the Schechinah of the Talmud and the Midrash, however personified for Haggadic purposes, was regarded as being in any sense a personality co-existent with God Himself. The Holy Spirit was either God, or the influence of God, but not a personality distinguishable from Him. Metatron comes nearest to the conception of a second God; but....the Pharisees of the Talmud expressly rejected the notion that he was a second God.[3]

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[1] Mk. 2:7; Mt. 9:3; Lk. 5:21.

[2] Mk. 14:61-65; Mt. 26:63-66; Lk. 22:70 f. Mark and Matthew give the impression that Jesus was accused of blasphemy for asserting that he was the Messiah. This could not have been blasphemy, for the Jews did not regard the Messiah as God in some metaphysical sense, but only as the emissary of God, however exalted he may have been above ordinary man. But Luke omits the charge of blasphemy because of an assertion of messiahship, and states only that he was accused of blasphemy for asserting that he was the Son of God. Understood in the way the church came to view the Son of God as the second Person of the Trinity, this was a blasphemous utterance, and worthy of death (Sanh. VII, 5). An unhistorical sense on the part of the Jews may have led them to believe that Jesus actually had confessed participation in the Godhead at his trial before Caiaphas. Because blasphemy of such a sort carried the penalty of stoning to death (Sanh. VII, 4), this may have contributed to the several instances in which rabbinic literature says that Jesus met his death by stoning (T. Sanh. X, 11 [the only example from the Tannaitic period]; Jer. Sanh. VII, 16 [25c, d]; Sanh. 43a; 67a). R. Meir, however, knew that Jesus was crucified (T. Sanh. IX, 7). The tradition that Jesus was stoned even reached the Koran (chap. 36).

[3] R. T. Herford, Pharisaism, Its Aim and Its Method (London: Williams & Norgate, 1912), p. 264.

But the Christian assertion that the Christ was pre-existent,[1] and that he had made the world,[2] contributed to the doctrine of the deity of the Messiah. Hence the term "the Son of God" came to mean something entirely different from what it had meant in Jewish usage when reference was made to the Messiah.[3] Its signified participation in the Godhead, and led to the doctrine of the Trinity. This development excited the Jewish complaint that the Christians had two Gods.[4]

The third objection--having to do with the cessation of the Christian observance of Torah, the dietary laws, and sabbath observance, plus the open character of the sect in its practice of receiving gentile converts without the usual requirements for entry into the Jewish nation--has received much study, and is not included in this thesis.

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[1]Heb. 1:3; Jn. 1:1-18; 3:16, 18; 6:33, 41: 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 16:28, 30; 17:5, 8, 11, 18, 22, 24 f.; I Jn. 1:2; the spurious I Jn. 5:7; possibly also in Paul: Phil. 2:6-11; II Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15, 17; Aristedes, Apol. (Syriac Version), 2; Athenagoras, A Plea for the Christians 10; Hermas, III, Similitude ix.12. Clement, Exhortation to the Heathen 11; Clement, The Instructor i. 11; Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews 9; Tertullian, On Idolatry 5. The doctrine of the pre-existence seems to have been drawn from Jewish pseudepigraphal literature, if the passages which imply such are not Christian interpolations: IV Ezra 12:32; 14:9; Apoc. of Baruch 30:1; I Enoch 46:1 f.; 48:3.

[2]I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2, 10; 11:3; Jn. 1:3, 10. Cf. II Peter 3:5. This idea may have been drawn from Ps. 33:6: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made."

[3]I Enoch 105:2; "I and my son"; IV Ezra 7:28 f: "My son the Messiah shall be revealed"; IV Ezra 13:32: "Then shall my Son be revealed": IV Ezra 13:37: "But he, my Son, shall reprove the nations"; IV Ezra 13:52: "Even so can no one upon earth see my Son but in the time of his day"; IV Ezra 14:9: "Thou shalt be taken up....and henceforth thou shalt remain with my Son."

[4]Complaints against the teaching that the Christ was pre-existent: Justin, Dial. 48, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 87. The assertion that the Old Testament teaches that there are two divine beings, and the Jewish denials, and charges that Christians are no longer monotheists: Justin, Dial. 11, 48, 65, 124, 126, 128, 129; Origen, Cels. i. 49, 57; viii. 12; Irenaeus Against Heresies III. vi; Irenaues, "fragment 23," Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I; Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews 9; Tertullian, Against Praxeas 3 f; Novatian, Treatise Concerning the Trinity 18 f; Sanh. IV, 5; T. Sanh. VIII, 7; Sanh. 38b; Menahoth 110a; Jer. Shabb., 8d; Jer. Berakhoth 12d, 13a; Sifre 143 p. 54a; Sifre Deut. 329, p. 139b; Tanhuma 47a; Pesikta r. XXI, p. 100b; Bereshith r.VIII, p. 22d; Shemoth r. XXIX, 5, p. 51b; Debarim r. II. 33, p. 104c.

CHAPTER II

JESUS' LIFE WAS NOT UNMESSIANIC IN CHARACTER

His Background Not Unworthy

Not born out of wedlock.—The Christian and Jewish literature after the first century both tell us that Jesus was said to have been born out of wedlock. His mother was accused by the Jew of Celsus of being an adulteress, who was turned out by her husband, a carpenter. Jesus' real father was a Roman soldier named Panthera, and Jesus was born in Egypt.[1] Scorn was poured upon the Christian account of Jesus' generation by saying that the Christians taught that Mary had had intercourse with a god.[2] Origen takes these charges quite philosophically by remarking, "It was to be expected, indeed, that those who would not believe the miraculous birth of Jesus would invent some falsehood."[3] Celsus' Jew delighted in pointing out the discrepancies in the Matthean and Lukan genealogies of Jesus, and Origen was forced to admit that "there are certain points which occasion some difficulty even to Christians."[4]

Analysis of Justin reveals that he did not find it necessary to defend Jesus from the charge of illegitimacy when writing to gentiles, but only when meeting Jewish criticisms. In his Apology he discusses the manner of Jesus' birth. It is clear that he is not writing to put to rest any criticism of Mary. But he does urge, for fear of criticism, that Mary conceived not through the medium of a god, but wholly without intercourse.[5] When he writes in answer to Jewish objections to Jesus, however, he is forced very hard to prove that Mary was a virgin mother. The Jews will not permit the use of Isaiah 7:14 as evidence that a virgin was prophesied as conceiving a son. They pointed out that the

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[1] Origen Cels. i. 28; 32.
[2] Ibid., i. 39.
[3] Ibid., i. 32.
[4] Ibid., ii. 32.
[5] Justin Apol. i. 33.

Hebrew הָעַלְמָה was not correctly translated by ἡ παρθένος in the Septuagint. Moreover, they insisted that this verse did not prophesy the birth of the Messiah, but of the king Hezekiah.[1] Origen, too, had to meet the objection on etymological grounds to the Christian use of the passage in Isaiah.[2] The importance of this point in Jewish eyes is seen in the fact that both Aquila and Theodotion changed ἡ παρθένος to ἡ νεᾶνις in their Greek versions of the Old Testament, which soon supplanted the Septuagint in use among the Greek-speaking Jews.[3]

Justin attempted to introduce another scripture to establish the doctrine of the virgin birth: "Who shall declare his generation?"[4] But the Jews were unconvinced, and the story of Jesus' illegitimate birth persisted, so that Christian writers often were forced to deal with it. Origen meets the charge not only in his Against Celsus, but also in one of his commentaries.[5] The aspersion appears in the Gospel of Nicodemus, or the Acts of Pilate.[6] Epiphanius puts the disturbing Panthera to rest by ascribing the surname Panther to Jacob.[7] John of Damascus improves on Epiphanius by including the names Panther and Barpanther in the genealogy of Mary.[8]

Another line of attack was also made on the story of Jesus' birth from a virgin mother, and both Justin and Origen were constrained to take note of it and find an answer. It is said that the Jews claimed that the Christians, themselves very harsh toward Greek mythologies, nevertheless introduced a story of their own God which was of the same nature. That Mary bore a son without the agency of a human father was compared to the Greek fables of Danae who as a virgin bore Perseus; Melanippi, Auge, and Antiope, who also bore children while they were virgins; Semele, who bore

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[1]Justin Dial. 43; 67; 71.

[2]Origen Cels. i, 34f.

[3]Irenaeus Against Heresies iii. xxi. 1. G. F. Moore, op. cit., I, 88.

[4]Justin Dial. 68, quoting Isaiah 53:8.

[5]Origen Comm. on John 20: 14 (Migne, Greek Series, XIV, 608).

[6]Acts of Pilate i. 1. [7]Epiphanius Heresies lxxviii. 7.

[8]John of Damascus The Orthodox Faith iv. 15.

Dionysus by Zeus; and Alcmene, who bore Heracles by Zeus.[1] It was argued that if the stories about these women were fictitious, the same applied to that of Mary.

Rabbinic literature also tells us that the Jews accused Jesus of illegitimacy. A passage from the Mishna, which is of the Tannaitic period, says, "R. Simeon b. Azzai said: I found a family register in Jerusalem and in it was written, 'Such-a-one is a bastard through [a transgression of the law of] thy neighbor's wife,' confirming the words of R. Joshua."[2] R. Simeon was a contemporary and friend of Akiba, at the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries. Both were disciples of the earlier R. Joshua, who is elsewhere expressly mentioned as one of the chief defenders of Judaism against the Minim,[3] as Akiba also was later.[4] This passage shows that Jesus' death was justified and fitting, for he had been born of a union which was prohibited under penalty of death.[5] This important item shows that the charge of illegitimacy was raised by Jewish leaders at least as early as 80 or 85 A.D.

Later items from the Talmud carry the matter further. An early fourth century passage states that Mary was a dresser of women's hair, and a woman of ill fame.[6] But this passage shows only the dimmest recollections of the gospel stories of Jesus and his birth.[7] An item from about the middle of the fourth century states that Mary "was the descendant of princes and rulers, she played the harlot with carpenters."[8] Elsewhere Jesus is called "the son of the harlot."[9] Other references to Mary are too late in date to have a bearing on our subject.[10]

How did this charge against Mary, and hence against Jesus,

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[1]Justin Dial. 69 f; Origen Cels. i. 37. [2]Yebamoth IV,13.

[3]Hagigah 5b; Erubim 101a; Koheleth r. I. 8, p. 4b.

[4]T. Parah III, 3; Shemoth r. XXX. 9, p. 53c, d.

[5]Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22. Cf. R. T. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903), pp. 43-45.

[6]Sanh. 67a. [7]Herford, op. cit., pp. 35-41.

[8]Sanh. 106a. [9]Pesikta Rabbathi XXI, 100b.

[10]Such as Shabb. 104b; Hagigah 4b; Hallah (Venice ed., 1528) 18b.

originate, and when? Throughout this thesis our study will show that the charges against Jesus' character were drawn from Christian oral and written sources, rather than from independent Jewish knowledge of the life and character of Jesus. Such was undoubtedly the case here. There is no evidence that Paul had a knowledge, or at any rate an interest, in stories of Jesus' miraculous birth. Indeed, he says that he was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh.[1] And Mark, the earliest of the gospels, says nothing about a miraculous birth. But Matthew and Luke include this feature in their birth and infancy stories, and from a negative reading of these the Jews must have raised the cry of illegitimacy. This conclusion is further borne out when we note how completely unconscious of any criticism Luke is in his presentation of the story. Matthew may have been conscious of such a criticism, or he may have anticipated it, for he details Joseph's concern over Mary's condition, and how Joseph is deterred from putting her away only by an angelic revelation to him in a dream that she was innocent of wrong-doing.[2] Therefore we may conclude that the story of the virgin birth was introduced late, at least into the Jewish world, and was in its Lukan form, perhaps, the basis of the Jewish insinuations against Mary and Jesus.

The Fourth Gospel which appeared some time later, and which was written by one who certainly knew Matthew and most likely Luke, omits all reference to the miraculous birth of Jesus. This cannot be due to lack of knowledge of it. When he does not repeat it can only be conjectured. The two most likely possibilities are that he did not like the story, or he deemed it discreet not to urge its acceptance because it was under heavy ridicule. We are accustomed to look on the first eighteen verses of the Fourth gospel as its prologue, but in one sense it is a new "birth story," or explanation of the basis of Jesus' divinity. The author transplants Greek and diaspora Jewish philosophic speculation on the Logos to the figure of Jesus, and presents him as unbegotten, the divine Son of God before all worlds, rather than as one who came into being for the first time by divine-human generation. The means and locality of Jesus' advent into the world is shrouded in the mystery of the statement, "And the word

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[1] Rom. 1:3.

[2] Mt. 1:18-24.

became flesh,"[1] for "when the Messiah cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."[2] The only mention of Jesus' birth is in 18:37, but it may better be translated thus: "To this end have I been begotten [instead of born], and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Of course John does not deny the virgin birth outright, for to do so would bring disharmony in the church, which he always seeks to avoid.[3] He quotes Philip referring to Jesus as "the son of Joseph."[4] In another place the Jews are said to have known him as such.[5] But aside from these, Jesus' father is always said to be God, the heavenly Father.[6] Logically, the presentation of Jesus as the divine Logos requires no virgin birth to supplement it; indeed, it is contradictory, for the virgin birth implies the original generation of Christ in the universe by the union of the divine and the human.

That Jesus is the Logos appears specifically only in the first verses of the gospel, but the implications of this concept run quite uniformly throughout its pages.[7] It is tempting to suppose that the Logos concept was in part introduced to free Jesus from the accusation of illegitimacy. Jesus is continually said to have come down from heaven.[8] He was not born, but existed even before Abraham.[9] When the Jews ask, "Where is thy father?" he answers, "If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also."[10] "We are not born of fornication," say the Jews.[11] Jesus

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[1]Jn. 1:14.

[2]Jn. 7:27. This view is found in Enoch 62:6; Apoc. of Baruch 29:3; 30:1; and IV Ezra 7:28; 13:32. Or the Messiah may already be born and yet not know his calling till Elijah comes and anoints him (Justin Dial. 8).

[3]Jn. 17:11, 21-23. [4]Jn. 1:45. [5]Jn. 6:42.

[6]Jn. 5:20; 6:38; 8:19, 23, 25-30, 42, 58; 10:30; 17:21-23, etc.

[7]See especially Jn. 8:23, 56, 58; 9:5.

[8]Jn. 3:13, 31; 6:32f, 38, 41; 8:23; 13:3; 16:28, etc.

[9]Jn. 8:56, 58.

[10]Jn. 8:19.

[11]Jn. 8:41.

says to them, 'Ye dishonor me.'[1] These passages appear in the long section in which Jesus accuses the Jews of being illegitimate.[2] It is possible that this chapter was written with the accusation against Jesus' legitimacy of birth in view. The author argues against the calumny in veiled fashion, insisting that Jesus' Father is God. The charge against Jesus is turned against his accusers by calling them illegitimate in the spiritual sense for dishonoring Jesus in the way they have done. That the subject of adultery and illegitimacy in connection with Jesus' birth is the burden of the eighth chapter seems to be borne out further by the late inclusion, or substitution for other material originally there, of the pericope adulterae at this point.[3]

There is no other mention of the virgin birth, either for it or against it, in the remaining canonical books aside from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author of this work insists on Jesus' pre-existence.[4] He is said to have sprung from the tribe of Judah,[5] even though elsewhere in the epistle his human parentage is denied outright.[6] Because the other books deal with subjects not akin to this, and possibly because they were intended chiefly for gentile consumption, where the virgin birth was no obstacle to faith, there is no treatment of the matter by them.

This doctrine had a varied history after the first century. Justin tells us that many Christians of his day posited Jesus' messiahship by virtue of divine election and not because of a miraculous birth.[7] As might be expected, the Ebionites rejected the doctrine.[8] Though Irenaeus does not mention them by name, he evidently refers to them and their belief that Jesus was a mere man, begotten of Joseph.[9] The same testimony is added by Hippolytus and Eusebius.[10] Jerome claims that the Fourth Gospel was written especially against the Ebionites, "who assert that Christ did not exist before Mary."[11] Those whom Epiphanius

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[1]Jn. 8:49. [2]Jn. 8:31-58. [3]Jn. 8:2-11.

[4]Hebrews 1:2; 2:10. [5]Heb. 7:14. [6]Heb. 7:3.

[7]Justin Dial. 48. [8]Origen Cels. v. 61.

[9]Irenaeus Heres. III.xix.1.

[10]Hippolytus Refutation of All Heresies vii. 22; Eusebius Eccl. Hist. iii. 27; vi. 17.

[11]Jerome Lives of Illustrious Men ii. 9. Cf. his Preface to the Commentary on Matthew.

called Ebionites seem to have been a separate group who combined heathenish elements of an Asiatic theosophistic kind with Jewish monotheism. To these Jesus was only a man, becoming a prophet by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him at his baptism.[1]

The Elkesaites seem to have retained belief in the virgin birth of Jesus. Jerome states that the Nazarenes also held to this doctrine.[2] Theodoret, however, says that the Nazarenes exalted Jesus only as a just man, but it is likely that he confounded them with the Ebionites.[3]

As to the gnostics, Simon Magus is said to have denied the virgin birth,[4] and Cerinthus and Carpocrates regarded Jesus as a mere man.[5] Origen says of the Ophites and Cainites: "They uttered such hateful accusations against Jesus as Celsus himself did."[6]

But by the time of the Catholic period, when the church had become almost totally gentile in membership and religious attitude, the doctrine of the virgin birth became firmly entrenched in the faith. The Palestinian church's objections to it were ineffective, for it had degenerated to a mere sect looked upon with distrust by the rest of the church. The Catholic period also was marked by a complete and final separation from Judaism, and the Jews no longer had any illusions about their ability to control the church, nor did they desire to do so. Hence their objections to the doctrines of the church became merely formal and intellectual, and no longer had a part to play in the effort which had once been made to keep the new sect orthodox. For centuries after, however, the Jews kept alive the old slander aginst Mary. We have noted its presence in late rabbinic literature. The Koran takes note of it, and says that the Jews "have spoken against Mary a grievous calumny."[7] And the Toledoth of the eleventh century continued the reproach.[8]

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[1]Epiphanius Heres. xxx. 17.

[2]Jerome Ep. 89, ad Augustinum.

[3]Theodoret Heretical Fables ii. 2. [4]Acts of Paul vii.7.

[5]Hippolytus op. cit., vii. 22.

[6]Origen Cels. vi. 28; iii. 13. [7]Koran 4.

[8]Samuel Krauss, "Jesus in Jewish Legend," Jew. Enc. VII.

The problem of Jesus' Galilean origin.---"From the point of view of the Jerusalemite Jews, the Galilean origin of Christianity was an insurmountable obstacle to its propagation."[1] Baldensperger claims that next to the cross itself, no other feature of Jesus' life was so objectionable.[2] Curious to say, neither the opponents of Justin in his Dialogue nor the Jew of Celsus raises objections at this point. But the gospels show that such objections were raised, and so we must deal with the matter.

While evidence of Judean disdain of Galilee and Galileans is slight, yet there are enough indications of it to warrant the commonly made assertion by modern writers that Galilee was regarded as a district of low culture and of more or less questionable orthodoxy. Moreover, it did not have the temple, and had no special religious significance in Israel's long history. Prophets from Galilee had been few. It was commonly said among the Jews that if they wanted to become rich, they should live in Galilee; if they wanted to attain religiously, they should live in Jerusalem. An item in the Talmud states that some Rabbis regarded Galilee as lying outside of Palestine, and accordingly being ritually unclean.[3] The unavoidably close and extensive contacts of the Galilean Jews with the large gentile population residing there may have induced in some of the Jews an attitude of comparative indifference to strict observance of Torah and the oral tradition. At all events, it does not appear in the gospels that the disciples or Galilean crowds were shocked by Jesus' criticisms of the law and the tradition.[4] Rather, they seem to have approved strongly of Jesus' stand on these matters.

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[1] D. W. Riddle, Jesus and the Pharisees (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), p. 62.

[2] G. Baldensperger, "L'Apologétique de L'Église et la Tradition Évangélique," Revue de Theologie et Philosophie, VIII (1920), 23.

[3] Shabbat 14b, 15a.

[4] A. Büchler, "The Law of Purification in Mark 7:1-23," Expository Times, XXI (October, 1909), 35; W. K. L. Clarke, "St. Peter and the Twelve," Parting of the Roads, ed. F. J. Foakes-Jackson (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), p. 179.

Though the synoptics do not do so, John tells us outright that the leaders of the Jewish nation objected to Jesus as the Messiah in the light of his non-Judean birth or background. "What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"[1] "Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."[2] "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"[3] It was predicted that the Messiah would appear in Bethlehem, the city of David.[4] The Fourth Gospel clearly shows that the Jews insisted that he had not been born there, despite the birth stories offered by Matthew and Luke to show that he had.[5] Whether Matthew and Luke included their varying accounts of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem in order to meet a criticism afloat in their day that Jesus had been born in Galilee, or whether they did so to provide another instance of harmony between the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah and the life of Jesus, we can only guess. It is interesting to note, however, that whereas Luke clearly says that Nazareth was the home of Joseph and Mary, and Jesus was born in Bethlehem while they were on a trip there, Matthew quite definitely implies that Bethlehem was the home of Joseph and Mary. They intended to return to it from Egypt after Herod's death, but when they discovered that the hated Archelaus was now ethnarch, they "withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth."[6] Therefore it is possible that Matthew wrote under the necessity of accounting for the fact that Jesus was a Galilean, and tried to bolster his explanation further by quoting an Old Testament text in the most extravagant rabbinical manner.[7]

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[1]Jn. 7:41 f. [2]Jn. 7:52. [3]Jn. 1:46.

[4]Micah 5:2. Cf. Mt. 2:5 f; Jn. 7:41 f.

[5]Jn. 7:41 f. [6]Mt. 2:19-23.

[7]Mt. 2:23, quoting Isa. 41:1. It is an interesting point that neither the Old Testament, the apocryphal or pseudepigraphal literature, Josephus, or the Talmud, ever mention Nazareth. But Joshua 19:15 tells us of a Bethlehem in Galilee, seven miles northwest of the place where Nazareth lay. Cf. Adolf Neubauer, La Géographie du Talmud (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1868), p. 191.

It is to be noted that the later synoptists in part overcome the provincial nature of Jesus' ministry. Luke intentionally avoid the words "Galilee" and "Galileans" in a number of instances where the parallel Markan and Matthean passages contain them.[1] The story of the raising of the young man at Nain says that as a result Jesus' fame was increased "in the whole of Judea, and all the region round about."[2] We would expect the word Galilee rather than Judea here. Luke uses Judea either to avoid calling unnecessary attention to the word Galilee, or to show that the miracle spread his fame far beyond the confines of little Galilee. Whichever reason it was, there can be little doubt that Luke desired to remove all basis for the charge that Jesus was an obscure provincial character. The same trend may be noticed occasionally in Matthew. He alters the Markan statement as to how Jesus' fame spread throughout Galilee to read that it "went forth into all Syria."[3]

In Mark and Matthew the ministry of Jesus is confined largely to Galilee with the exception of the final days at Jerusalem. But Luke adds missions to upper Galilee, Samaria, Perea, and Judea, giving an impression of a much more cosmopolitan ministry. The Fourth Gospel carried this trend even farther by sharply restricting the Galilean ministry,[4] and placing the bulk of it in Jerusalem and Judea, with notices of activity in Samaria, Trans-Jordania, Perea, and the region east of Galilee. Far from being an obscure Galilean missioner, Jesus taught at the headquarters of the national religion, not once, but repeatedly. In one place at least, the author seems to imply that Jesus was not a Galilean but a Judean. He went to Galilee because he "had no honor in his own country."[5]

But even so, there was no denying that Jesus had been known as the Galilean, or the Nazarene.[6] Matthew explains how the

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[1] E.g., Lk. 3:21; 4:37; 6:17; 7:17, etc. [2] Lk. 7:17.

[3] Mt. 4:24. [4] Jn. 2:1-12; 4:45-54; 6:1-7:9.

[5] Jn. 4:43 f.

[6] Mt. 21:10; Mk. 14:67; Mt. 26:71; Lk. 22:59; Lk. 23:6 f.

family came to remove from Judea to Galilee after Jesus' birth by indicating their fear of Archelaus, and by calling in what scriptural support he can to account for it.[1] Jesus' removal of residence from Nazareth to Capernaum, rather than to Judea, is explained also by appeal to prophecy.[2] The Fourth Gospel meets the objections to Jesus' messiahship because of his Galilean citizenship[3] by reporting Jesus as saying, "Ye judge after the flesh."[4] Throughout this gospel Jesus' earthly background and nature are consciously subordinated to his heavenly. What is important is not where Jesus was from in a physical sense, but that he had come from heaven.[5]

The resurrection stories may also have been affected by this matter of Jesus' Galilean origin and ministry. Mark implies that the resurrection appearances first were experienced in Galilee, and Matthew locates them there.[6] But Luke-Acts locates them in Jerusalem, and places the ascension at Bethany. There is no hint of a return to Galilee on the part of the disciples after Jesus' death. On the contrary, the Christian movement got under way in Jerusalem itself, and radiated from it. The Fourth Gospel also locates the resurrection appearances at Jerusalem rather than in Galilee, and only the appended twenty-first chapter, from another hand, brings the disciples back to Galilee where they again see Jesus.

The problem of Jesus' background as a carpenter.—Along with this objection against Jesus' Galilean background appears to have been the conviction that God would hardly prepare his Messiah by prescribing a preliminary career as a carpenter. Manual labor was frowned upon as beneath the dignity of a well-born man or lady of the empire. Menial tasks were fit only for slaves and people of the common sort.[7] Therefore the Christian case for Jesus was scarcely enhanced by publicizing his early life as a common

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[1] Mt. 2:20-23, quoting Isa. 11:1.

[2] Mt. 4:13-16, quoting Isa. 9:1 f.

[3] Jn. 7:27, 41 f, 52. [4] Jn. 8:15.

[5] Jn. 7:27-29; 8:14 f, 23.

[6] Mk. 16:7; Mt. 28:10, 16-20.

[7] S. J. Case, The Social Triumph of the Ancient Church (New York: Harpers, 1933), pp. 57-59.

carpenter. It is not clear that the Jews raised an issue over this point. But Tertullian implies that they spoke disparagingly of Jesus' trade.[1] It appears that Justin is defending Jesus from such an objection when he says that Jesus' occupation as a carpenter was a part of his appearance without comeliness, as the scriptures declared would be the case, and that by such work "he taught the symbols of righteousness and an active life."[2]

It appears that the later synoptists were under some compulsion when they wrote, for the Markan question, "Is not this the carpenter?"[3] is altered by Matthew to read, "Is not this the carpenter's son?"[4] and by Luke to read, "Is not this Joseph's son?"[5] It is apparent, therefore, that the occupation of Jesus was suppressed in the parallel passages. Matthew transfers the occupation from Jesus to his father, and Luke adopts the device of omitting all reference whatever to the trade of Jesus or of his father. The Fourth Gospel follows the line of Luke: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph?"[6] Therefore a person who had never read Mark would not know that Jesus ever had been a carpenter, and if he had not read Matthew either, he would be unaware of any connection with carpentry in the family of Jesus.

The problem of Jesus' lack of rabbinical training.—When the Christians insisted with the greatest earnestness that Jesus was the Messiah, we may conjecture that the Jews inquired into his educational background to see if he had been trained in the Law and the religious life of the nation. The Jews noted that he had not spoken as the scribes,[7] and in view of the fact that he was only a carpenter (Mark), or a carpenter's son (Matthew), they were offended in him.[8] As is often the case, Mark enters into no direct defense of Jesus in the face of this criticism. Matthew does so partially by transferring reference to Jesus' occupation to his father, as we have seen. But Luke goes farther.

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[1]Tertullian On Shows 30. [2]Justin Dial. 88.

[3]Mk. 6:3. [4]Mt. 13:55. [5]Lk. 4:22.

[6]Jn. 6:42.

[7]Mt. 7:29.

[8]Mk. 6:2 f; Mt. 13:54, 57.

Besides omitting all mention of carpentry, he expunges or changes, whichever the case may be, the pericope which narrates the offense that the Jews took in Jesus for deigning to teach with only carpentry as a background. In an earlier section Luke records the question that was asked about Jesus: "Is this not Joseph's son?" But here it is expressly said that words of grace came from Jesus' mouth, and no offense was given because of a lack of proper rabbinical or scribal training. Rather, the Jews were scandalized by Jesus' teaching that God loved and aided gentiles as well as Jews, sometimes even singling them out for help while at the same time passing by Jews in need of the same divine healing or help.[1] Luke, therefore, has eliminated all suggestion that offense was found in Jesus because of a background unbefitting a prophet sent from God. Moreover, he adds a story of the remarkable insight that Jesus had in spiritual matters, even at the age of twelve, so that the men learned in the law "were amazed at his understanding and his answers."[2] It is entirely within the realm of possibility that Luke chose this story to show that Jesus was fully qualified for a public ministry, and that the objection to Jesus because of his background of menial labor was unjustified.

The matter was still acute when the Fourth Gospel was written, for its author specifically reports the supposedly Jewish criticism that Jesus did not know letters, and therefore the sacred scriptures, which would bar him from the right to teach publicly,[3] and he endeavors to answer it. The defense takes several forms: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me."[4] "I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me."[5] "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."[6] "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is from God, or whether I speak from myself."[7] "He that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."[8] In an earlier chapter it is stated that "he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning

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[1] Lk. 4:16-30. [2] Lk. 2:41-50. [3] Jn. 7:14 f, 26.

[4] Jn. 7:16. [5] Jn. 7:29. [6] Jn. 7:24.

[7] Jn. 7:17. [8] Jn. 7:18.

man; for he himself knew what was in man."[1] These passages, then, show that the aspersions cast upon Jesus' background were unjustified, for Jesus intuitively knew without formal education; he was sent from God and therefore bore his message; earthly standards of competence to speak in the name of God, therefore, are not to be applied to Jesus.

His Manner of Life Not Despicable

The public life and activity of Jesus was subjected to all kinds of scurrilous accusations by the Jewish opponents of the church. Jesus was described by Justin's opponent as "dishonorable and inglorious," so that "the last curse contained in the law of God fell on him, for he was crucified."[2] Celsus' Jew calls him "a most degraded man, who was punished by scourging and crucifixion."[3] The Talmud says that at Jesus' trial "they found naught in his favor," and so he was put to death.[4]

Jesus not a vagabond.—As to more specific accusations, we note first the assertion by Celsus' Jew that "Jesus went about with his disciples, and obtained his livelihood in a disgraceful and importunate manner."[5] He was also accused of "leading the wandering life of a vagabond, and passing an anxious existence in a disgraceful body."[6] These statements evidently were based on a negative reading of the synoptic gospels, especially Luke, and so they had not appeared when the gospels were written. Nor does the Fourth Gospel reveal a consciousness of such charges against Jesus. There is but one possibility, and that is very slight. The question of the disciples, "Hath any man brought him aught to eat?" brings forth the reply, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," implying Jesus' independence from the help of his friends and followers.[7]

Jesus not a sinner.—But there is no question that the gospel writers were forced to deal with the slander that Jesus was a sinner. This charge was put forward to depreciate the claim for Jesus' messiahship, for the common messianic hopes envisioned

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[1] Jn. 2:25.
[2] Justin Dial. 32.
[3] Origen Cels. ii. 31.
[4] Sanh. 43a.
[5] Origen Cels. i. 65.
[6] Ibid., ii. 38.
[7] Jn. 4:33 f.

a sinless and altogether righteous Messiah.[1] In the Testaments of the Patriarchs the Messiah is called "the light of righteousness."[2] "The spirit of holiness shall be upon him,"[3] "and no sin shall be found in him."[4] In the Book of Enoch the name "the Righteous One" first appears as a messianic designation.[5] This appellative was given to Jesus by many Christians who were convinced of his messiahship.[6] Paul, too, referred to Jesus as "him who knew no sin."[7] His sinlessness is mentioned also in the later canonical books.[8]

But the Jewish opponents of the church did not accept such a claim for Jesus. Celsus' Jew insists that "he did not show himself to be pure from all evil."[9] "He was not irreproachable,"[10] but was guilty of impiety.[11] On what were these charges based? Mainly on the fact that Jesus had died the death of a criminal. Perhaps, too, they appealed to the statement of Mark, followed by Luke, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God."[12] Matthew saw the discrepancy between this word from Jesus' lips and the doctrine of his sinlessness, and so he alters the question thus: "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments."[13] Luke introduces the statement of the repentant robber: "This man hath done nothing amiss," evidently to put down the Jewish claim that Jesus had died a criminal.[14] All through the gospels Jesus is presented as a man of highest moral stature, and as we shall see in later chapters, his death is accounted for as the fulfillment of scripture and

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[1] Isa. 9:6 f; 11:3-5; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 9:9; Mal. 4:2; Enoch 46:3; 71:14; Pss. Sol. 17:25-51.

[2] Test. Zeb. 9:8. [3] Test. Levi 18:11. [4] Test. Judah 24:1.

[5] Enoch 38:2; 53:6. [6] Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; I Jn. 2:1.

[7] II Cor. 5:21. Cf. Rom. 5:19, 21; 6:18.

[8] Heb. 7:26-28; 9:14; I Peter 2:22; I Jn. 3:5, etc.

[9] Origen Cels. ii. 41. [10] Ibid., ii. 42. [11] Ibid.,ii.7.

[12] Mk. 10:18; Lk. 18:19.

[13] Mt. 19:17.

[14] Lk. 23:41.

the will of God.

The fact that Jesus had submitted to a baptism for the remission of sins needed explaining. It is most likely that Mark introduced this event of Jesus' life to exhibit his anointing for the messianic office by Elijah, in fulfillment of the popular messianic expectations of the advent of the Messiah and the beginning of his activity. But while this story assisted the messianic delineation of Jesus from one side, it was found to cause embarrassment from another, for it was all too well known that John had preached a baptism of repentance for sin. Luke notices no discrepancy here, but Matthew does. The latter interpolates the item about John's surprise: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."[1] Later Christian writers also were forced to explain Jesus' submission to a baptism of repentance. Justin says that "he did not go to the river because he stood in need of baptism....but because of the human race, which from Adam had fallen under the power of death."[2] The Gospel According to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus recoiled from the suggestion of Mary and his brothers that they all go and be baptized by John unto the remission of sins: "Wherein have I sinned, that I should be baptized of him?" The fragmentary nature of the remains of this gospel leaves us to guess how the problem was resolved.[3] The Gospel of the Ebionites says that John besought Jesus to baptize him when he discovered who Jesus was.[4] Ignatius offers a most remarkable explanation of why Jesus submitted to this baptism: "He was baptized that by his passion he might purify the water (baptizatus est ut passione aquam purificaret)."[5]

The Fourth Gospel proceeded differently. It suppressed all mention of Jesus' baptism at the hand of John. There can be no doubt of this, for all the other details of the baptism are there: John, his practice of baptizing people in water, Jesus'

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[1]Mt. 3:14 f. [2]Justin Dial. 88.

[3]Gosp. Acc. to the Hebrews, quoted in Jerome Dial. Against Pelagius III. 2.

[4]Gosp. of the Ebionites, quoted in Epiphanius Heresies 30.

[5]Ignatius Ephesians 18.

coming, and the descent of the Spirit as a dove upon him.[1] Moreover, the Fourth Gospel completely obliterates John's activity as a preacher of repentance. His function is only to proclaim the advent of the Lamb of God. Jesus comes to him not to be baptized, but to enable John to identify him for the people.[2] It is possible to explain this attitude on the part of the author as due to a desire to depreciate John and subordinate him in every respect to Jesus, because of the rivalry of the Baptist sect at the end of the first century. But it is fully as likely that this delineation of John and Jesus was set forth to remove the stigma against Jesus' sinlessness caused by submitting to a baptism of repentance. This view is strengthened by the fact that the gospel directly carries the Jewish charge that Jesus was a sinner.[3]

There is further evidence that the synoptists as well as John were conscious of the Jewish charge that Jesus was a sinner. The reproach of Celsus' Jew, that Jesus was "in the habit of eating and drinking" with his own disciples "to such a degree of wickedness that they became impious and unholy men,"[4] is found in the later synoptics, where Jesus is accused of having been "a gluttonous man and a hard drinker."[5] The reason for this Jewish charge is clear: not only was gluttony and drunkenness frowned upon as a manner of life,[6] but it was considered most unsuitable conduct on the part of one who was proclaimed the Messiah. Matthew and Luke are content to record the criticism of Jesus, but do not deem it worthy of direct reply.

The charge that Jesus was a sinner seems to have gained in intensity after the synoptists, for the Fourth Gospel deals with it fairly extensively. We have already noted that three times he is called a sinner. His sin was probably connected with Sabbath-breaking[7] and sacrilege.[8] Sometimes it appears to be suggested that his sin was occasioned by being made, or possessed by a demon.[9] John's defense may be summed up in a word: "How can

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[1]Jn. 1:29-34. [2]Ibid. [3]Jn. 8:46; 9:16, 24.

[4]Origen Cels. ii. 20. [5]Mt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34.

[6]Deut. 21:20; Prov. 23:20; Sanh. VIII, 2.

[7]Jn. 5:16; 9:16. [8]Jn. 5:18.

[9]Jn. 8:48, 52; 9:13-41; 10:20.

a man that is a sinner do such signs?"[1] Proof that Jesus was no sinner is the sign furnished by the remarkable cure of the man born blind. Try as they might, the authorities were unable to shake the reality of this miracle and explain it away.[2] Moreover, Jesus was no sinner for curing people on the Sabbath, for the Father, too, works on the Sabbath.[3] Jesus had no demon, and was therefore no sinner, because he sought not his own glory, but that of the Father.[4]

The problem of Jesus' association with despised classes.-- The Jews tried to add force to the reproach that Jesus was a sinner by pointing out his habit of associating with despised classes. The dangers of moving among sinful and immoral people was commonly recognized by upright Jews.[5] And the Messiah was expected to judge them rather than associate with them.[6] Ofttimes "sinners" was the designation for gentiles,[7] but this was not always the case.[8] Certainly it was not so in the case of Jesus, for apart from his contacts with the Syrophoenician woman, the centurion, and the Samaritans, no activity with non-Jews is recorded of him. The criticism was leveled rather at his mingling with such debased people as 'Am Haarets, law-breakers, harlots, and publicans. Celsus' Jew represents Jesus "as one who will lead the pious to the light, and who will have mercy on others, whether they sin or repent."[9] As we shall see later, the criticism also included the type of men he drew about him as his disciples.

There is no question that this charge against Jesus was widely current among the Jews at the time when the gospels were written. It is often reported in the synoptics.[10] Our interest is to see whether the evangelists, or their sources, made a conscious attempt to clear Jesus' name because of this character-

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[1] Jn. 9:16. [2] Jn. 9:1-41. [3] Jn. 5:17.

[4] Jn. 8:46-50, 54 f.

[5] Ps. 1:1; Prov. 1:10, 15; 4:14 f; I. Cor. 5:9, 11; Eph. 5:11. Sir. 8:10 f.

[6] Enoch 38:1-3; 45:6; Mt. 25:31-33.

[7] Jubilees 23:24; Gal. 2:15.

[8] Pss. Sol. 17:6. [9] Origen Cels. ii. 71.

[10] E.g., Mk. 2:16; Mt. 9:11; Lk. 5:30; Mt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34; 15:2.

istic of his. Such was necessary, it would seem, for, while the synagogue was always open to repentant sinners, they were not actually sought out by the Jewish religious leaders, and Jesus' doing so in order to lead them to repentance was a new attitude which did not accord with Pharisaic sentiment.[1]

The call of Levi to discipleship, and the dinner at which "many publicans and sinners" were present furnished the setting for the defense of Jesus for associating with such folk. All three synoptists report the word that not those who are well need a physician, but those who are sick, and that Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners (Luke adds, to repentance).[2] Matthew characteristically explains this attitude on Jesus' part by appeal to the normative Old Testament: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."[3]

Luke introduces other materials to relieve Jesus of the odium attached to such conduct. Because "this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,"[4] Luke devotes three parables of Jesus to illustrate his attitude and defend his conduct. They are the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son, and they follow one another without a break after this reproach against Jesus is reintroduced.[5] They all bring out the truth that God is genuinely interested in the sinner, and will go out of his way to seek and to save that which is lost. Accordingly, Jesus' association with such people was right and proper, and offered no occasion for offense to anyone.

Luke adds in addition a story to defend Jesus' concern over fallen women. When he was anointed by such a person in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Simon's misgivings over Jesus' attitude toward her are answered by pointing out that those who have sinned much could appreciate being forgiven much, and therefore they were capable of being saved and suffering a change of heart and life.[6]

Criticism of Jesus' interest in despised publicans also calls forth an incident from his life. As a result of Jesus'

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[1] C. G. Montefiore and Israel Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, 1st Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), pp. 54 f.

[2] Mk. 2:13-17; Mt. 9:9-13; Lk. 5:27-32. [3] Hosea 6:6.

[4] Lk. 15:2. [5] Lk. 15:2-32. [6] Lk. 7:36-50.

interest in him, Zacchaeus underwent a change of heart and became a just man, restoring fourfold to all whom he had wronged, and giving half of his goods to the poor. Therefore he also became once more a "son of Abraham," and not a despised outcast, because of Jesus. For the Messiah "came to seek and to save that which was lost."[1]

In the Fourth Gospel no publicans, sinners, or fallen women are anywhere mentioned apart from the extraneous pericope adulterae. One cannot escape the impression that omission of all such stories was deliberate and pre-meditated, not accidental. We cannot know the full reasons why the author chose to delete all stories of such associations in Jesus' life, but in great measure this course was determined by the desire to erase from his career all records of association with sinners for the reason that such social contacts were deemed unbefitting the Messiah.

Jesus not a coward.—Celsus' Jew in several places reproaches Jesus for having been a coward, and not conducting himself as the Son of God might be expected to act in the face of enemies. He feigns to address him, accusing him of "wandering about in so mean a condition, hiding yourself through fear, and leading a miserable life up and down."[2] "In company with your disciples you go and hide yourself in different places."[3] He asks, "Who that is sent as a messenger ever conceals himself when he ought to make known his message?"[4] "After we [the Jews] had convicted him, and condemned him as deserving of punishment, he was found attempting to conceal himself, and endeavoring to escape in a most disgraceful manner, and was betrayed by those whom he called disciples."[5]

The Talmud also has a vague tradition that Jesus fled before regal displeasure. It tells that as a young man he fled from Palestine to Alexandria, Egypt, with his teacher R. Joshua b. Perahyah, in order to escape the persecutions of the Jewish king Alexander Jannaeus.[6] How obscure the tradition of cowardice was is shown by the anachronism of dating Jesus in the life of this

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[1] Lk. 19:1-10. [2] Origen Cels. i. 61. [3] Ibid., i. 65.

[4] Ibid., ii. 70. [5] Origen Cels. ii. 9 f.

[6] Sanh. 107b; Sotah 47a; Jer. Hag. 77d.

tyrant who ruled from 103-76 B.C.

Such charges as these unquestionably arose from a negative reading of Mark and Matthew, both of whom make a number of statements which could be so construed. Luke we shall observe, however, wrote at a time when and in a locale where these charges had already appeared in reaction to the Markan and Matthean stories.

It could easily be interpreted from Mark and Matthew that Jesus fled the dominions of Antipas when John was imprisoned, for fear of like treatment at his hands.[1] But at the parallel point Luke changes the passage completely by saying, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." John's imprisonment goes unmentioned.[2] Mark and Matthew again say that after Jesus got the news of John's execution, he left Galilee for a desert place across the lake.[3] But at the parallel point Luke neither removes Jesus from Antipas' territory, nor takes him to a desert place, but to the town of Bethsaida in Galilee.[4] In fact, he does not even mention in the preceding verses the manner in which John met his death, and so an independent reading of Luke would offer no occasion to infer that Jesus removed to Bethsaida for fear of Antipas. To further illustrate that Jesus had no fear of Antipas, Luke later introduces the pericope of how friendly Jews warned Jesus to leave Antipas' dominions for he wanted to kill him, but Jesus gives a scornful answer, in effect saying that he will stay as long as he likes, and will finally leave only that he may be put to death in Jerusalem rather than in Galilee or Perea, "for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."[5]

Mark, and especially Matthew, imply that the Pharisees' plots against Jesus' life after he had healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, led Jesus to withdraw from the region.[6] Luke also mentions the incident, and the intention against Jesus' life, but omits any mention of a withdrawal on Jesus' part on that account.[7]

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[1] Mk. 1:14; Mt. 4:12. [2] Lk.4:14.

[3] Mk. 6:30-32; Mt. 14:13. [4] Lk. 9:10.

[5] Lk. 13:31-33. [6] Mk. 3:6 f; Mt. 12:14 f.

[7] Lk. 6:11 f.

Once again, Luke takes out of the Gethsemane scene all features which might have made it possible to accuse Jesus of cowardice. Unlike Mark and Matthew, he does not name the obscure Gethsemane, but the better-known Mount of Olives, and adds that it was Jesus' custom to go there. He deletes Mark's statement that Jesus said to three of his disciples, "Abide ye here, and watch [keep watch, γρηγορεῖτε]," which could imply that Jesus had set guards to warn him if his enemies came to attempt his seizure. The author of Matthew must have been dissatisfied with his Markan source at this point, too, for he alters the apparent meaning entirely by adding "with me.": "Abide ye here, and watch with me."[1] Moreover, Luke omits the Markan statement that Jesus "began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled (Matthew, sorrowful and sore troubled)."[2] Jesus did not fall on the ground, as Mark says, or on his face, as Matthew puts it, but knelt down and prayed. If we omit, with the majority of the better manuscripts, the references to the strengthening angel, the agonized prayer, and the bloody sweat,[3] all sense of soul-struggle is removed, and the Gethsemane scene is but an incident of no particular importance. This is further brought about by the elimination of the three-fold prayer, and the word of Jesus, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."[4]

On one other occasion, Matthew seems to alter a pericope in order to remove the possibility of saying that Jesus moved about in the city by cowardly and stealthy means. The command to the disciples to follow a man carrying a pitcher of water--which might be interpreted as a pre-arranged signal--is so radically altered as to make the passage completely innocuous.[5]

The Fourth Gospel reveals the same trend that Luke shows, but it goes even farther. Jesus often went to the garden with his disciples, and so Judas knew the place.[6] There is no Gethsemane scene whatever prior to Judas' arrival; no prayer, and no agony.

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[1] Mk. 14:34; Mt. 26:38.

[2] Mk. 14:33 f; Mt. 26:37 f. [3] Lk. 22:43 f.

[4] Mk. 14:32-42; Mt. 26:36-46; Lk. 22:39-46.

[5] Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13; Mt. 26:17-19.

[6] Jn. 18:1 f.

The prayer is mentioned, however, in an earlier chapter: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour!"[1] There is no flinching on the part of Jesus in this gospel!

Other refinements in the Fourth gospel serve to remove all opportunity of reproaching Jesus with a charge of cowardice. Judas does not give him the betrayer's kiss, nor reveal Jesus' identity in any way. In fact, Jesus himself reveals his identity by asking twice whom the cohort of soldiers is seeking, and twice announcing, "I am he."[2]

All mention of Herod Antipas is removed from Jesus' life in the Fourth Gospel, and accordingly any possibility of his fear of him is erased. Jesus left Judea for Galilee because "the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John."[3] Whatever this statement means, it clearly indicates that fear of Antipas played no part in the decision to go to Galilee. In fact, it is expressly mentioned that Jesus left Judea, which was not part of Antipas' tetrarchy.[4] Throughout the gospel Jesus always speaks publicly, even engaging in disputes over his nature with the most important men of the nation. He was not arrested earlier because "his hour had not yet come."[5] Jesus finally announces in his last public discourse that the hour has come for his glorification.[6] But as so often is the case, John does not follow through with complete consistency. Twice he says that Jesus hid himself from the Jews,[7] and twice he reports that Jesus removed himself to other regions because of designs on his life.[8] These passages were not inconsistencies in the author's mind, however, for he may have regarded such actions on Jesus' part necessary to prevent his death until the hour had come for the divine drama of redemption to take place.

Celsus' Jew makes one other charge of cowardice, or rather, weakness under suffering. Jesus "rushed with open mouth to drink

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[1] Jn. 12:27. [2] Jn. 18:4-8.

[3] Jn. 4:1. [4] Jn. 4:3. [5] Jn. 7:30; 8:20.

[6] Jn. 12:27. Cf. 13:1; 17:1.

[7] Jn. 8:59; 12:36.

[8] Jn. 7:1; 11:53 f.

of them [the vinegar and the gall], and could not endure his thirst as any ordinary man frequently endures it."[1] Mark and Matthew state that Jesus refused the wine mingled with myrrh (Matthew, with gall) which was offered to him.[2] They record that near the end Jesus took the vinegar.[3] Therefore neither writer appears to have been aware of a criticism such as that which Celsus' Jew later made. But Luke may have been, for he chooses to omit both incidents. John appears to have been conscious of this criticism, for he omits the first incident, and of the second says that Jesus uttered the words "I thirst," and drank the vinegar that the scripture might be fulfilled.[4] Therefore he felt constrained to find scriptural justification for Jesus' taking of the vinegar.

Was Not Rejected by Israel

Believers in Jesus were not few.--Popular messianic expectations among the Jews envisioned a compelling leader who would gather Israel into united action, either of a political or moral nature. He would be all but universally acclaimed. Indeed his recognition would extend even among the heathen nations, and among heathen kings and potentates. It would be impossible for the Messiah to go unrecognized and unhonored once he had publicly appeared.

When the early believers set out to persuade the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, they were compromised by the fact that Jesus had not been at all like the figure the Jews envisioned. His following had been small, his reputation neither of national nor world-wide proportions, and he had been rejected by Israel's spiritual and political leaders. He had been ejected from the synagogues and had been forced to find a hearing in the open air. And, finally, he had been rejected by the rank and file, and died the despised death of a political criminal and the accursed death of one rejected by God himself. It was a task of the severest difficulty to persuade Jews that such a one was the Messiah. Therefore we may be confident that the primitive preaching to the Jews,

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[1] Origen Cels. ii. 37. [2] Mk. 15:23; Mt. 27:34.

[3] Mk. 15:36; Mt. 27:48.

[4] Jn. 19:28-30.

from which a great part, if not all, of our gospel material was derived, had to be shaped to face the issue and square Jesus' life with the popular messianic hopes, as well as to exhibit him to the gentiles as a compelling and popular figure.

We know definitely that the second century Jews are said to have pointed to the lack of success which Jesus had in winning appreciable numbers to his point of view, or to acceptance of him as the Messiah. Celsus' Jew asserts that Jesus was received with incredulity, and hence could not have been a god.[1] He maintains that Jesus "gained over no one during his life, not even his own disciples."[2] He contends that Jesus "when on earth gained over to himself only ten sailors and tax-gatherers of the most worthless character, and not even the whole of these."[3] In derision he says, "You will not, I suppose, say of him that, after failing to gain over those who were in this world, he went to Hades to gain over those who were there."[4] Jesus, he concludes, was not very persuasive: "He makes use of threats, and reviles men on light grounds, when he says, 'Woe unto you,' and 'I tell you beforehand.' For by such expressions he manifestly acknowledges his inability to persuade; and this would not be the case with a god, or even with a prudent man."[5]

Were such aspersions current in Palestine and among the Jews around the world in the early decades, when the gospel materials were taking shape? We believe they were. As usual, Mark does not offer a considerable amount of rebuttal to these charges, but Matthew and Luke do. In the first place, they show that Jesus had friends beyond the circle of the twelve. Mark reports only two such: Joseph of Arimathea, and the woman in the house of Simon the leper.[6] Mark's account tells us of no contacts with anyone beyond the circle of his own disciples apart from the crowds to whom he preached and the nameless individuals whom he healed. But Matthew and Luke add others: the centurion,[7] the woman in

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[1] Origen Cels. ii. 74. [2] Ibid., ii. 39.

[3] Ibid., ii. 46. [4] Ibid., ii. 43.

[5] Ibid., ii. 76.

[6] Mk. 15:43-46; Mt. 27:57-60; Lk. 23:50-53; Mk. 14:3-9; Mt. 26:6-13.

[7] Mt. 8:5-13; Lk. 7:1-10.

the house of Simon the Pharisee, who recognized Jesus' moral greatness, and poured oil on his head as an act of devotion,[1] women disciples who accompanied Jesus on his preaching tours,[2] Mary and Martha,[3] the friendly Pharisees,[4] and Zacchaeus.[5] Matthew tells us that John the Baptist recognized Jesus' moral greatness, if not his Messiahship.[6] And Luke tells us that Joseph of Arimathea had not consented to Jesus' condemnation.[7]

In addition to these, Matthew and Luke in their birth and infancy stories furnish a number of instances of the recognition of Jesus. The Magi saw in the infant Jesus the King of the Jews.[8] Matthew and Luke also introduce angels to announce Jesus' conception and his birth, and to inform Joseph of the action he is to take.[9] Other recognitions of Jesus as the Messiah are offered by Luke: those of Elizabeth,[10] Mary,[11] Zacharias,[12] the shepherds,[13] Simeon,[14] and Anna.[15] John the Baptist even before his birth leaped for joy within his mother when Mary, bearing Jesus within her, came into Elizabeth's presence.[16] Moreover, in Acts he tells us that "a great company of priests were obedient to the faith,"[17] and that certain Pharisees also were believers.[18]

In addition to such individuals who believed, all three synoptists make frequent mention of the adulation of the multitudes and the widespread fame which Jesus enjoyed, extending, it is sometimes said, well beyond Palestine itself.[19] His audiences

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[1] Lk. 7:36-50. [2] Lk. 8:1-3; 11:27; 23:27 f, 55.

[3] Lk. 10:38-42. [4] Lk. 13:31-33; cf. 19:39 f.

[5] Lk. 19:1-10. [6] Mt. 3:14 f. [7] Lk. 23:51.

[8] Mt. 2:1-11.

[9] Mt. 1:18-24; 2:13-23; Lk. 1:11-20, 26-38; 2:8-15.

[10] Lk. 1:42 f. [11] Lk. 1:47-55. [12] Lk. 1:76-79.

[13] Lk. 2:8-20. [14] Lk. 2:25-35. [15] Lk. 2:36-38.

[16] Lk. 1:41-44. [17] Acts 6:7.

[18] Acts. 15:5.

[19] Lk. 1:28; Mt. 4:24 f; Lk. 4:14 f; Mk. 1:45; Lk. 5:15 f; Mk. 2:12; Mt. 9:8; Lk. 5:26; Mk. 3:7 f; Lk. 6:17; Mk. 4:1; Mt. 13:2; Lk. 8:4; Mk. 5:20; Lk. 8:39; Mk. 7:37; Mk. 8:1; Mt. 15:32; Lk. 15:1; 19:3, etc.

ran into the thousands.[1] He fed five thousand people at one time.[2] Matthew understands this number as men, and says that besides these Jesus fed women and children. On another occasion it is said that he fed four thousand people.[3] The common people shouted, "A great prophet is arisen among us, and God hath visited his people."[4] The multitudes were more and more convinced that Jesus was the longed-for Son of David.[5] When Jesus was near Jerusalem the crowd which accompanied him "supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear" when he entered the city.[6] He was greeted by the crowds as the Messiah when he entered Jerusalem.[7] Even the children so hailed him in the temple area.[8] "All the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, to hear him."[9] "The common people heard him gladly."[10] Moreover, the common people were so sympathetic toward Jesus that he had to be arrested by trickery.[11] And they were favorable toward the new sect of the Believers, so that the authorities had to proceed against it with caution.[12] The officials, and not the people, were the ones who desired Jesus' destruction.[13] His arrest and trial took place at night, an illegal procedure. He was hailed before Pilate in the early hours of the morning, before the city was aware of what was on foot. The embarrassing fact that the crowd had demanded that Pilate impose the death sentence is explained by Mark and Matthew as the fault of the high priests and elders, who stirred them up to do this.[14] Luke, followed by John, deemed it better, however, to omit all mention of the crowd at the trial before Pilate. Matthew suppresses Mark's explanation

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[1] Lk. 12:1. [2] Mk. 6:44; Mt. 14:21; Lk. 9:14.

[3] Mk. 8:9; Mt. 15:38. [4] Lk. 7:16. [5] Mt. 12:23 f.

[6] Lk. 19:11. [7] Mk. 11:9; Mt. 21:9; Lk. 19:38.

[8] Mt. 21:14-16. [9] Lk. 21:38. [10] Mk. 12:37.

[11] Mk. 11:18; Lk. 19:48; Mk. 12:12; Mt. 21:46; Lk. 20:19; Mk. 14:1 f; Mt. 26:4 f; Lk. 22:2, 6.

[12] Acts 4:21; 5:26. Cf. Lk. 11:52; Mt. 23:13.

[13] Mk. 14:10 f; Mt. 26:14-16; Lk. 22:4-6.

[14] Mk. 15:11; Mt. 27:20.

of Pilate's sentence of death in order to "content the multitude."[1] Nor does such an explanation of Pilate's act appear in Luke or John, for there is no crowd present. Luke informs us that when Jesus was on the way to the cross, "there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him."[2] Luke also suppresses all mention of crowds at the cross who railed at Jesus, as Mark and Matthew had done. They merely "stood beholding."[3] John, too, omits this item of the Markan narrative. Luke tells us, moreover, that the people, "when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts."[4]

Despite all these mentionings of Jesus' popularity, fame, and recognition as the Messiah beyond the little circle of the twelve, it could not be denied, however, that Jesus had been rejected, not only by the Jerusalem authorities, but also by the great majority in Galilee, or at least in Nazareth. This circumstance is explained by a current proverb, "No prophet is acceptable in his own country."[5] Luke deletes all mention of Jesus' inability to heal everyone because of their unbelief. The Galileans' unbelief is also accounted for by Mark and Luke with an allusion to a prophecy of Isaiah. Matthew feels constrained to quote it verbatim and at length, to show that the disbelief in Jesus was not at all strange conduct toward the Messiah, but was fully predicted.[6] Luke also uses this text at the close of Acts to account for Jewish resistance to the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah by the missionaries of the church.[7] The rejection of Jesus was also accounted for by the fact that God had willed, and prophecy had predicted, that the Messiah must suffer and be rejected by the generation to which he came.[8]

Despite all these evidences of Jesus' popularity which were put forward, the fact still remained that the Jews had not considered Jesus the Messiah during his lifetime. Indeed it is a

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[1] Mk. 15:15; Mt. 27:25. [2] Lk. 23:27.

[3] Mk. 15:29; Mt. 27:39; Lk. 23:35. [4] Lk. 23:48.

[5] Mk. 6:4; Mt. 13:57; Lk. 4:24.

[6] Isa. 6:9 f. Mk. 4:12; Mt. 13:13-15; Lk. 8:10.

[7] Acts 28:25-28.

[8] Mk. 8:31; Mt. 16:21; Lk. 9:22; Mk. 9:31; Mt. 17:22 f; Lk. 9:44; Mk. 10:33 f; Mt. 2:18 f; Lk. 18:31-33; Lk. 17:25.

question of greatest difficulty if even the disciples themselves had done so, for apart from Peter's confession[1] there is no clear evidence of such a belief on their part. Moreover, the resurrection stories are all but inexplicable if the disciples had fully regarded Jesus as the Christ before his death. Mark explains the failure of the people to look upon Jesus as the Messiah as due to his insistence that his identity and his identifying miracles be kept a secret, at least until his advent into Jerusalem. Incidentally, if the crowds had hailed him as the Messiah at the time of his entry into the city, there is no explanation offered of how they came to such a belief, and likewise no accounting for why they regarded him as worthy of death a few days later. Matthew and Luke at times follow Mark in delineating Jesus as wanting to keep his messianic nature concealed, but they are much less consistent in this than Mark. Very often they prefer to present Jesus openly revealing his glory and receiving the adulation of the people. In four instances Mark records that Jesus commanded people not to disclose the miracles that he had performed, and Matthew follows Mark in one of these, and Luke in two.[2] Twice Mark says that Jesus commanded demons not to reveal who he was. Luke follows Mark in one of these, and Matthew in the other, where the latter adds a prophecy of Isaiah in explanation of this practice of secrecy.[3] Once Mark says that the disciples were told not to reveal Jesus' messiahship: after Peter's confession. Here both Matthew and Luke agree with Mark.[4] Jesus sometimes withdraws before working a miracle, so that only his immediate followers, or the person who is cured, know that it has been done.[5] And at least once he is said by all three synoptists to have spoken in parables, not to illustrate and clarify his message, but to obscure it from the masses. The

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[1]Mk. 8:27-29; Mt. 16:13-16; Lk. 9:18-20.

[2]Mk. 1:43; Mt. 8:4; Lk. 5:14; Mk. 5:43; Lk. 8:56; Mk. 7:36; Mk. 8:26. Matthew gives one instance of this independently of Mark and Luke: Mt. 9:30.

[3]Mk. 1:34; Lk. 4:41; Mk. 3:12; Mt. 12:16-21, where Isa. 42:1-3 is quoted.

[4]Mk. 8:30; Mt. 16:20; Lk. 9:21.

[5]Mk. 5:40; Mt. 9:25; Lk. 8:51; Mk. 7:33; Mk. 8:23.

disciples were expected to be able to "decode" this type of address, but when they failed, he provided the explanation of the parables in private.[1]

The Fourth Gospel also yields a mass of evidence that Jesus had many believing friends and witnesses extending far beyond the circle of the twelve. They include the popular John the Baptist,[2] his disciples,[3] the Pharisee Nicodemus,[4] the nobleman,[5] the Bethany family,[6] Joseph of Arimathea,[7] and even the high priest when speaking under inspiration.[8] Jesus is said to have had believers in every section of Palestine: the Jerusalemites,[9] Samaritans,[10] Galileans,[11] those from the region east of Galilee,[12] Trans-Jordanians,[13] the passover crowd from all "the world,"[14] and Greeks.[15] Even many "rulers" of the nation believed in him.[16] Many more Jews would have believed in Jesus if the leaders had allowed it.[17] In this gospel Jesus is proclaimed the Messiah and Son of God throughout the course of his ministry, rather than only during the final week. Even before Jesus began his work John the Baptist twice made it known to all his hearers that Jesus was the Lamb of God.[18] Others who openly pronounce him to be the Messiah are Andrew,[19] Nathanael,[20] Peter,[21] and Martha.[22] Jesus

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[1]Mk. 4:10-12; Mt. 13:10-17; Lk. 8:9 f; Mk. 4:33 f; Mt. 13:34 f.

[2]Jn. 1:6-8, 15, 19-34; 3:22-36; 5:33; 10:41.

[3]Jn. 1:35-51; 2:11. [4]Jn. 3:1 f; 7:50 f; 19:39-42.

[5]Jn. 4:46-54. [6]Jn. 11:1-44; 12:1-8.

[7]Jn. 19:38-42. [8]Jn. 11:51 f.

[9]Jn. 2:23; 7:12, 26, 31, 43, 46; 8:31; 9:33, 38; 10:19-21; 11:45.

[10]Jn. 4:1-42. [11]Jn. 4:43-45. [12]Jn. 6:14 f.

[13]Jn. 10:40-42. [14]Jn. 12:12-19. [15]Jn. 12:20-22.

[16]Jn. 12:42.

[17]Jn. 3:1 f; 7:13, 25-27, 31 f, 40-43, 45-52; 11:48.

[18]Jn. 1:29-35. [19]Jn. 1:41.

[20]Jn. 1:49. [21]Jn. 6:69.

[22]Jn. 11:27.

at no time attempts to keep his messiahship unknown; rather, and from a very early time in the course of his work, he himself proclaims that he is the Messiah and the Son of God.[1]

But despite all these witnesses to Jesus which John introduces, he is still face to face with the hard fact that Jesus was rejected. This he explains and accounts for in several ways. He uses the same proverb that had been adopted by the synoptists, but seems to apply it to Judean opposition rather than Galilean, as if Jesus had been a Judean.[2] And he also quotes Isaiah 6:10 to account for the Jerusalemites' unbelief, as the synoptics had done.[3] But he adds another scripture at the same point to reinforce the matter beyond question.[4]

In accounting for Jesus' death, he subordinates the historical fact of the Jewish rejection, and expands the theological explanation of his death, portraying it as a cosmic drama, in which Jesus in no sense was the victim of circumstances, but openly and willingly engaged in the divine drama of redemption. All sense of the tragic is removed. John does not dwell on the injustice of the proceedings against Jesus. Judas' role is completely altered, as we shall see in detail later. There are no crowds present either to prevent Jesus' death or to demand his crucifixion. Jesus died not because he was rejected, but because it was the will of God and his own will, that he die for the sins of the world. Plots against his life were completely ineffectual until Jesus announced that his hour had come. With this treatment of the matter, John furnishes his answer to the Jewish contention that Jesus could not have been the Messiah in light of his rejection by the nation and his death as a criminal and under a curse of God.

<u>The problem of Jesus' family's disbelief in him</u>.--From a reading of Mark, the Jews as well as the gentiles could strengthen their case by pointing out that even Jesus' own mother and brothers disbelieved in him. Mark's reading of the proverb about

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[1]Jn. 4:25 f; 5:17 f; 9:35-38; 10:30.

[2]Jn. 4:43-45.

[3]Jn. 12:40.

[4]Jn. 12:39, quoting Isa. 53:1.

the prophet without honor contains the phrase, "among his own kin." Matthew and Luke at the parallel point remove this phrase.[1] A Markan pericope tells us that "when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself."[2] Very significantly, both Matthew and Luke, who we must remember composed their gospels independently, omitted this story entirely. Another Markan pericope, which tells of the coming of Jesus' family to see him does not of itself suggest that they disbelieved in him, and so both Matthew and Luke adopt it, but all the same Luke feels constrained to soften it somewhat.[3]

On the positive side, Matthew's birth stories contain material which shows that Jesus' parents were supernaturally informed of the wonderful nature of their son.[4] Hence it is entirely consistent for Matthew to have avoided those Markan passages which suggest that Jesus' family did not believe in him. Luke carries this even farther in his birth and infancy stories. The angelic annunciation and Mary's song show that she was fully conscious of the remarkable son she was to bear.[5] Twice she is said to have laid up in her heart the remarkable things said of and by her son.[6] And in the Acts section of his work, Luke portrays Mary and Jesus' brothers as among the earliest devoid believers.[7] Luke too, then, was entirely consistent in effacing all suggestions contained in the Markan source of disharmony between Jesus and his family. An independent reading of either Matthew or Luke would never suggest even to an opponent that Jesus' family disbelieved in him.

What the position of the author of the Fourth Gospel was on this matter is not clear. He tells us at one place that Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.[8] On the other hand, he appears to present Mary as a believer.[9] The former pericope bristles with a real problem for us for other reasons, too, which are due

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[1] Mk. 6:4; Mt. 13:57; Lk. 4:24. [2] Mk. 3:21.

[3] Mk. 3:31-35; Mt. 12:46-50; Lk. 8:19-21.

[4] Mt. 1:18-25. [5] Lk. 1:26-38, 46-55. [6] Lk. 2:19, 51.

[7] Acts 1:14.

[8] Jn. 7:2-9.

[9] Jn. 2:3-5; 19:25.

in great part to a situation the knowledge of which is now lost to us. At all events, the story was not told to bring out the brothers' unbelief, but for some other reason.

The disciples not morally inferior men.—The disciples of Jesus came in for much criticism in the second century as sinners and morally inferior men. The Jews pointed this out to show that far from winning the nation, Jesus was able to attract only a few people, and of a most inferior sort at that. Celsus' Jew asserts that Jesus "gathered around him ten or eleven persons of notorious character, the very wickedest of tax-gatherers and sailors."[1] In a similar passage he says that these were all that Jesus could win over while on earth, and not even the whole of them.[2] Origen thinks that such a view was based not only on the record of Matthew's occupation as a publican, but upon Peter's words, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man,"[3] and the words of Paul, "This is a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."[4] It is remarkable that Origen offers no defense of the moral integrity of the disciples before their call by Jesus, but seems to admit that these charges were true.[5] This same admission is made in the Epistle of Barnabas: "When he chose his own apostles who were to preach his gospel, [he did so from among those] who were sinners above all sin." Barnabas accounts for this choice on the part of Jesus "that he might show he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."[6] The Talmud also implies that the disciples were sinners, for it reports the execution of five of them: Matthai, Nakai (possibly Luke), Nezer (Nazarene, a general designation for Christians), Boni (probably the Nicodemus of John), and Thoda (Thaddaeus).[7] An accusation of another kind is also to be found: the disciples were ignorant and untutored rustics, who had no right to arrogate for themselves the office of teacher of the masses.[8]

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[1] Origen Cels. i. 62. [2] Ibid., ii. 46.

[3] Lk. 5:8. [4] I Tim. 1:15. Origen Cels. 1.63.

[5] Ibid., i. 63 f. [6] Barnabas 5.

[7] Sanh. 43a. The article "Jesus" by Samuel Krauss in Jew. Enc., Vol. VII, makes the above suggestions as to identification.

[8] Recog. of Clement i. 62.

At times the gospels appear to be aware of such criticisms against the disciples. Levi the publican's inclusion in the company of the twelve is defended, inferentially at least, with the words, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."[1] Luke appears to alter the meaning of the passage by adding the words "to repentance" at the end.[2] Moreover, he omits Jesus' rebuke of Peter when he addresses him as Satan.[3] Mark's account of the unseemly request of James and John for an honored position in the coming kingdom is altered by Matthew so that the mother of the disciples is the one who asks this of Jesus for her sons.[4] Luke omits the story entirely, although he had knowledge of it, as Luke 12:50 shows. But he admits in Acts that the disciples were "unlearned and ignorant men."[5] Together with Matthew he records a prayer of Jesus: "I thank thee, O Father....that thou didst hide thses things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes."[6] This seems to have been introduced to neutralize the criticism of Jesus that he was unable to win over intelligent and prominent people, by showing that such was Jesus' purpose all along, for it was well-pleasing in God's sight that the church's leadership should fall to men of inferior station in life. Paul, too, testified that "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," and proceeds to explain why God should build his church in this manner.[7]

In the Fourth Gospel the synoptic pericopes which could be seized upon to give point to the accusation against the moral quality of the disciples are omitted. The word publican does not appear. "Sinner" is never mentioned in connection with the disciples. Peter is not called Satan, but Judas is called a devil.[8] The disciples are nowhere mentioned as fishermen excepting in the appended twenty-first chapter. Jesus' ministry is never said to

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[1] Mk. 2:15-17; Mt. 9:10-13.

[2] Lk. 5:29-32. Chrysostom says that James [the Less] was also a tax-collector (Hom. in Mt. 23).

[3] Mk. 8:33; Mt. 16:23.

[4] Mk. 10:35-45; Mt. 20:20 f.

[5] Acts 4:13.

[6] Mt. 11:25 f; Lk. 10:21.

[7] I Cor. 1:26-31.

[8] Jn. 6:70.

have consisted of a calling not of the righteous, but of sinners. There is no allusion to the unlettered state of the disciples. John's thorough consistency in this matter makes it extremely likely that he deliberately chose to avoid all statements about the disciples which might reflect upon them or upon Jesus for choosing such men.

The assertion in Acts that the disciples were ἀγράμματοι and ἰδιῶται ,[1] undoubtedly was interpreted by some Jews as indicating that they were illiterate and stupid fellows, and not merely unversed in scripture and rabbinic lore.[2] If this criticism of the disciples was present among the Jews in the first century, we have the clue to a progressive toning down of the Markan statements that the disciples constantly misunderstood or failed completely to fathom many of Jesus' words. Mark tells us about the repeated dullness of understanding on the part of the disciples in order to account for the fact that Jesus had not been looked upon as the Messiah before his death. But in closing one door of criticism he unwittingly opened another. He answers the criticism against Jesus' messiahship in view of his not being recognized as such even by his own disciples during his lifetime, but makes it possible to raise the other cry, that Jesus was unable to win over any but a miserable little band of ignorant men.

When we turn to Matthew's and Luke's treatment of the Markan statements about the failure of the disciples to understand the words of Jesus, we discover that they eliminated or toned them down with great consistency. They eliminate the Markan report of Jesus' disapproval of the disciples for their failure to comprehend the meaning of his parables.[3] They also eliminate Mark's statement that Jesus explained his parables in private to his disciples.[4] Mark's report of Jesus' sharp rebuke of the disciples for their failure to understand the import of his miracles is omitted by Luke and toned down by Matthew.[5] Matthew then adds that the disciples suddenly understood, a statement not appearing in Mark. The Markan statement that "they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened,"[6]

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[1] Acts 4:13.

[2] Recog. of Clement i. 62.

[3] Mk. 4:13.

[4] Mk. 4:34.

[5] Mk. 8:17 f; Mt. 16:9, 11 f.

[6] Mk. 6:52.

is omitted both by Matthew and Luke. When Jesus predicted his death and resurrection, Mark says, "But they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him."[1] Luke accounts for this failure to understand this prediction with a theory: "it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it."[2] Luke makes the same point later: the saying was hidden from them, evidently by God, and so it was not their fault that they did not understand.[3] After the resurrection, however, the veil which had obscured their understanding was lifted.[4] Matthew, however, does not concede that the disciples failed to understand Jesus' prediction of his death and resurrection. Instead of failing to understand, "they were exceeding sorry."[5] To prove that the disciples at all times did understand Jesus, Matthew adds two statements not found in either Mark or Luke. "Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea."[6] When Jesus spoke about Elijah, the disciples knew without hesitation that his reference really was to John the Baptist.[7]

Accordingly the evidence shows quite conclusively that the explanation which Mark offered to explain why Jesus was not regarded as the Messiah by his disciples in his lifetime cast a reflection on the intelligence and competence of the disciples, and upon Jesus for being unable to attract a more worthy following. Matthew and Luke felt this, for the latter omits all such references, or adopts a theory that an outside force, presumably God, deliberately and for some purpose darkened their understanding until after the resurrection. Matthew, on the other hand, consistently deletes every Markan reference to the failure of the disciples to understand, and, on the positive side, adds details here and there to show that they did understand. The fact that Matthew and Luke worked the Markan source independently of each other adds force to the conclusion that the church was under a compulsion to free Jesus from the reproach that he was unable to attract men of ability, understanding, and uprightness of character.

It is not clear what the attitude of the author of the Fourth Gospel was on this matter. He at no time records Jesus

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[1]Mk. 9:32. [2]Lk. 9:45. [3]Lk. 18:34.

[4]Lk. 24:6-8, 45. [5]Mt. 17:23. [6]Mt. 13:51.

[7]Mt. 17:13.

berating his disciples for their lack of understanding, as Mark had done. However, twice he says that the disciples failed to understand symbolic sayings of Jesus: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of,"[1] and "Lazarus has fallen asleep."[2] The stories wherein these two misunderstandings of the disciples appear show clearly that there was no intention of deliberately exhibiting their dullness of mind, as Mark had done. Rather, the author seems to have had in mind the purpose of exhibiting Jesus as a person of supramundane form of speech, which ordinary mortals were incapable of fathoming, due to the difference between them and the divine figure who had come into their presence. Jesus gives up this form of address in his last hour with his disciples, so that they cry with relief, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying (παροιμίαν)."[3] Whether the writer of this gospel was aware of the criticisms of the disciples' stupidity is therefore difficult to decide, but the evidence seems to show that he quite consciously put the disciples in as favorable a light as he could by omission of the items in Mark which were the basis of such a criticism.

The disciples not cowards.--Second century Jews as well as gentiles criticized the disciples for their cowardice during Jesus' seizure, condemnation, and crucifixion. Justin defends the disciples by saying that they repented of their flight.[4] Tertullian attempts to explain away the cowardice of the disciples by saying that they "were tempted because they fell asleep." He offers in addition the proverb, "No man that is not tempted shall obtain the kingdom of heaven."[5] The Didascalia offers the same proverb, in a slightly altered form: "A man that is not tempted is not approved."[6]

A reading of the gospel of Mark made it possible for the opponents of Christianity to make such charges. Matthew, and especially Luke, try to overcome this feature of their Markan source. Mark's statement, "They that followed were afraid,"[7]

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[1]Jn. 4:31-34. [2]Jn. 11:11-13. [3]Jn. 16:29.

[4]Justin Dial. 106. Cf. Justin Apol. i. 50; Origen Cels. ii.45.

[5]Tertullian On Baptism 20.

[6]Syriac Didascalia (Didascalia Apostolorum), ii. 8.

[7]Mk. 10:32.

is omitted by both of them, even though they repeat the Markan narrative both prior to and following this statement. Matthew adopts Mark's device of accounting for the disciples' desertion as a fulfillment of scripture,[1] but Luke omits the story, and also the later account by Mark and Matthew of the actual flight.[2] All three gospels take pains to show that Peter's denial brought him to remorse, but Mark's "He wept" is intensified by Matthew and Luke to "he wept bitterly."[3] Thereafter the disciples drop completely out of the synoptic accounts until after the resurrection. Though the gospels do not say that the disciples were at the cross, there is on the other hand no suggestion to be found anywhere that they were in hiding. Indeed, Luke in the Acts section of his work brings out clearly that their activity after the resurrection began almost at once, and with great boldness and courage.[4]

The Fourth Gospel removes all incriminating statements with regard to the disciples' courage which appear in Mark, with the exception of Peter's denial. This is presented not as in the synoptics, to bring out Peter's remorse, but to exhibit Jesus' power of prediction, for no remorse on the part of Peter is indicated.[5] The disciples were aware of the danger to Jesus and themselves if they returned to Judea, but even so Thomas "said unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him," and the entire company returned to Judea.[6] Not only Peter, but another disciple also, followed Jesus after his arrest, and not from a distance, as the synoptics say.[7] At least one follower, the beloved disciple, was present at the cross.[8] Thus far there is a consistent portrait of the disciples' activity which precludes all suspicion of cowardice on their part. But in the resurrection stories fear of the Jews is admitted,

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[1] Mk. 14:27; Mt. 26:31, quoting Zech.13:7.

[2] Mk. 14:50; Mt. 26:56.

[3] Mk. 14:72; Mt. 26:75; Lk. 22:62.

[4] Acts 2:1, 5 f; 3:1, 11 f, etc.

[5] Jn. 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27.

[6] Jn. 11:7 f, 16-18. [7] Jn. 18:15. [8] Jn. 19:26 f.

for the disciples kept themselves behind closed doors.[1] This is another instance of the phenomenon which repeatedly stands out in this gospel: almost any statement made about it is confronted with a passage or two which dissents from it. In this case, however, the author may not have regarded the disciples' seclusion as an act of cowardice, but as an act of prudence, and so it did not occur to him that such a hiding away behind closed doors might be interpreted as cowardice.

The problem of Judas.--Judas' betrayal offered special difficulties to the Christians of the second century at the hands of the Jews and gentiles, and if Jesus were the Messiah and the Son of God, he surely would have known that Judas was a blackguard, and would have either dismissed him from the circle of the twelve, or would have taken steps to circumvent his plot. Moreover, if Jesus were what the Christians claimed he was, no disciple of his could bring himself to plot against him, if only for fear of the consequences to himself. Celsus' Jew chides the Christians thus:

> No good general and leader of multitudes was ever betrayed, nor even a wicked captain of robbers and commander of wicked men, who seemed to be of any use to his associates; but Jesus, having been betrayed by his subordinates, neither governed like a good general, nor, after deceiving his disciples, produced in the minds of the victims of his deceit that feeling of good will which, so to speak, would be manifested towards a brigand chief.[2]

"He who was partaker of a man's table would not conspire against him; and if he would not conspire against a man, much less would he plot against a God after banqueting with him."[3]

Mark feels under no compulsion to offer an explanation for this amazing conduct on the part of one of Jesus' own disciples. Only after Judas had gone to the high priests and offered to deliver Jesus to them is it said that they were glad, and promised to give him money.[4] In other words, Mark does not suggest that Judas' act was motivated by a desire for money. Matthew, on the other hand, feels constrained to offer an explanation for Judas' conduct. So he says that Judas went to the high priests with the bold question, "What are ye willing to give me,

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[1] Jn. 20:19, 26. [2] Origen Cels. ii. 12.

[3] Ibid., ii. 21. Cf. ii. 22. [4] Mk. 14:10 f.

and I will deliver him unto you?"[1] In other words, according to Matthew, Judas betrayed Jesus for personal gain. Luke follows Mark, and shows that money was not the object in Judas' mind when he went before the authorities.[2] But, like Matthew, he too feels it necessary to offer an explanation for Judas' act. His solution is that Satan entered and possessed him.[3] In Acts Luke resorts to the familiar device of explaining embarrassing events as forced by the necessity that scripture be fulfilled.[4] John adopts the explanation of Luke in his gospel, that the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray his master.[5] When Judas received the sop, Satan entered into him.[6] In fact, Jesus long before had called him a devil.[7] But John also shows the influence of the Matthean explanation, for he says that Judas had such an inordinate love of money that he was a thief.[8]

Mark felt no need of accounting for Judas' end and for getting him off the stage of history, but Matthew and Luke did. They offer widely diverging legends of the sequel to Judas' deed. Matthew says that Judas repented of his act, returned the money, and in despair went out and hanged himself.[9] With the money the officials bought the potters' field to bury strangers in.[10] In his Acts section Luke indicates no remorse on Judas' part, and no suicide. On the contrary, he kept the money, and with it bought a field. Thereupon, apparently as a divine judgment, he fell down and burst asunder in the midst, and so came to his end.[11]

Later Christian literature also felt the compulsion of explaining Judas' deed, and the end to which he came. One story has it that he hung himself because he knew that Jesus would rise again on the third day.[12] Papias says that "Judas walked about

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[1] Mt. 26:14 f. [2] Luke 22:4 f.

[3] Lk. 22:3-5. Cf. Acts of Thomas 32.

[4] Acts 1:16, quoting Ps. 69:25 and Ps. 109:8. [5] Jn. 13:2.

[6] Jn. 13:27. [7] Jn. 6:70. [8] Jn. 12:6.

[9] Mt. 27:3-5. [10] Mt. 27:6-10. [11] Acts 1:18-20.

[12] <u>Acts of Pilate</u>, Part I, Rescension B of the Greek, chap.

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in this world a sad example of impiety; for his body having swollen to such an extent that he could not pass where a chariot could pass easily, he was crushed by the chariot, so that his bowels gushed out."[1] Occumenius quotes this passage, and adds yet other particulars: Judas' eyes were swollen shut, his body was covered with running sores and worms. The solitary place where he was buried was so evil-smelling that all who stopped had to hold their noses.[2] Another legend tells us that Judas was devoured by snakes.[3]

All the gospels take pains to show that Jesus did not come to grief because he was the victim of Judas' defection and betrayal. On the contrary, it was written in the scripture that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again. Moreover, Jesus knew well in advance of Judas' purpose, and could have prevented his own arrest if he had so desired.[4] But these facts in no sense absolved Judas of his guilt. It would have been better for him had he never been born, all the synoptics agree.[5] John implies the same by saying that the "son of perdition" was lost.[6] In the Fourth Gospel Jesus deliberately chose Judas to play this part in the cosmic drama: "I know whom I have chosen."[7] Judas' act is further explained in this gospel as a necessary fulfillment of scripture.[8] In fact, Judas' part in the Fourth Gospel is so restricted that it had no practical bearing on Jesus' arrest. There is no hint that he had conferred with the Jewish authorities in advance. Judas did not disclose who Jesus was, but Jesus made his own identity known.[9] He did not give the betrayer's kiss. The arrest would have been impossible if Jesus had not acquiesced in it, for the troops fell helpless to the ground in Jesus'

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[1]J. A. Cramer, Catenae in Evangelia S. Matthaei et S. Marci (Oxford: University Press, 1840), p. 231.

[2]Oecomenius Comm. in Acts 1:18 (Migne Greek Series, Vol. CXVIII, Cols. 57-60).

[3]Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle.

[4]Jn. 10:17 f; 18:6, 11; 19:10-12a.

[5]Mk. 14:21; Mt. 26:24; Lk. 22:22. [6]Jn. 17:12.

[7]Jn. 13:18. Cf. E. C. Colwell, John Defends the Gospel (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1936), p. 73.

[8]Jn. 13:18, quoting Ps. 41:9. [9]Jn. 18:5, 8.

presence.[1] Judas did no more than point out where the garden was.[2]

His Life Not Devoid of Messianic Signs

It never occurred to the Jews that they might fail to recognize the Messiah when he came to Israel. His life would be accompanied by marvelous signs and heavenly portents, and his career would be studded with glorious achievements. When the church called upon the Jews to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, naturally they raised the question of signs: what had occurred, or what had been done by him, that gave evidence of his being the Messiah sent by God? Their persistent demand for signs plagued the Christian missionary to the Jews. Paul admits that "the Jews ask for signs."[3] The synoptics record many times that the Jews sought such manifestations of Jesus' messiahship.[4] The gospel of John also is conscious of this insistence.[5] Indirectly the synoptics confess the reasonableness of this request on the part of the Jews, for they all quote Jesus' teaching that marvelous signs would accompany the Messiah's advent.[6] On the gentile side, too, a god was expected to perform many marvelous deeds as signs of his deity.

Scarcity of signs in Jesus' life.--In the second century Celsus' Jew pointed to the fables of the marvelous deeds of the god Perseus, Amphion, and others, but "what has thou done that is noble or wonderful either in deed or word? Thou hast made no manifestation to us, although they challenged you in the temple to exhibit some unmistakable sign that you were the Son of God."[7] "Why does he not give some manifestation of his divinity and free himself from this reproach?"[8] We shall see in a later chapter how the miracles of Jesus were presented in the gospels, at least in part, as signs of Jesus' messianic character. But

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[1] Jn. 18:6. [2] Jn. 18:2 f. [3] I Cor. 1:22.

[4] Mk. 8:11; Mt. 16:1; Mt. 12:38; Lk. 11:16, 29. Cf. Mk. 11:28; Mt. 21:23; Lk. 20:2.

[5] Jn. 4:48; 6:30 f.

[6] Mk. 13:4; Mt. 24:3, 24, 30; Lk. 21:7, 11, 25.

[7] Origen Cels. 1. 67. [8] Ibid., 11. 35.

other signs are also offered. On the basis of an Old Testament passage, "There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,"[1] it was expected by some Jews that the Messiah's advent would be heralded by a star. "In the west a star shall shine, which they shall call a comet, a messenger of the sword, famine, and death, and the destruction of ruling men and great notables."[2] "His star shall arise in heaven as of a king."[3] "And after these things shall a star arise to you from Jacob in Peace."[4] And so Matthew tells of the star that appeared to the magi of the east announcing the birth of "the King of the Jews," as a sign that his day had now finally come.[5]

In the course of Jesus' life, however, he is uniformly said to have treated with scorn the Jewish requests for a sign. Matthew on one occasion, however, quotes Jesus announcing his death and resurrection as a sign, comparable to the experience of Jonah, who was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish.[6] He also carries an allusion to this sign of Jonah in a later chapter, and Luke, too, alludes to the sign of Jonah.[7] Translated into the needs of the church in the period of pericope and gospel formation, the Jews as well as the gentiles are furnished in the resurrection of Jesus a sign for which they have been asking.

The Fourth Gospel very frankly presents the miracles there recorded as signs of Jesus' messiahship and divine nature, as we shall see more fully in a later chapter of this study. No Messiah would do more miracles than Jesus did, hence he is the Messiah.[8] The Jewish leaders stubbornly refused to believe

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[1]Num. 24:17. [2]Sib. Oracles iii. 334-36.

[3]T. Levi 18:3. [4]T. Judah 24:1. [5]Mt. 2:1-3, 7-10.

[6]Mt. 12:38-40; 16:4; Lk.11:29 f. J. H. Michael argues (J. Theol. St. XXI [Jan., 1920], pp. 146 f) that Ἰωνᾶς is a very early corruption of Ἰωάνου, due to the subsequent mention of Jonah. The original saying, then, would be that John was the only sign to that generation. That these two names could, and sometimes did, become confused, is seen by comparing Mt. 16:17 and Jn. 21:15. This theory, however, is not required to give sense to the pericope.

[7]Mt. 16:4; Lk. 11:29 f. [8]Jn. 7:31.

despite the overwhelming proofs of his messiaship.[1] "But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him," and this unbelief is accounted for by appeal to Old Testament predictions that such would be the case.[2] Therefore this gospel without question argues for Jesus' messiahship and divinity on the basis of his miracles, even though it be true that John offers fewer miracle stories than any of the synoptics.

John also calls attention to the resurrection as a sign of Jesus' divine nature, but without mention of it as a type of Jonah.[3] In the fifth chapter John refers to several proofs or signs that Jesus was what the church claimed for him, appealing in turn to the testimony of John the Baptist,[4] Jesus' "works,"[5] the voice of the Father,[6] the prophecies of scripture,[7] and his own testimony to himself.[8] In the next chapter the Eucharist is also treated as a sign.[9]

John the Baptist as a sign.--The relation of John the Baptist to Jesus, and of the Baptist's followers to the church in its formative period is among the most difficult problems of New Testament study. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to review all the aspects of the matter, both historical and interpretive, which arise over the Baptist and his movement. But among the reasons for introducing John in the gospels must have been the desire to show that in him one of the signs and requirements of the Messiah's coming had been fulfilled, so that Jews could not say that Jesus was not the Messiah for lack of a forerunner. Such a forerunner was predicted in the scriptures.[10] This forerunner was quite generally viewed by the Jews as being Elijah returned to earth (for he had never died).[11] In the first century A.D. Jews continued to hold this opinion: "How is it that the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"[12] The same opinion held among the Jews in the first half of the second century.

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[1] Jn. 9:30-34; 11:46 f.

[2] Jn. 12:37-40, quoting Isa. 53:1; 6:10.

[3] Jn. 2:18-22. [4] Jn. 5:33-36. [5] Jn. 5:36.

[6] Jn. 5:37. [7] Jn. 5:39, 45-47. [8] Jn. 5:38-44.

[9] Jn. 6:30. [10] Mal. 3:1-3; 4:5 f; Isa. 40: 1-17.

[11] Mal. 4:5 f; Sirach 48:10. [12] Mk. 9:11; Mt. 17:10.

Trypho points out that the Messiah will not appear "and has no power until Elijah come to anoint him."[1] "From the circumstance that Elijah has not yet come, I infer that this man [Jesus] is not he [the Christ]."[2] Justin meets this criticism with the assertion that John the Baptist was really Elijah, and so the condition of a forerunner was fulfilled in him.[3]

There is every indication that the synoptic writers were conscious of the same Jewish criticisms in their day. John the Baptist is quite fully and consistently portrayed as Elijah the forerunner. He was "the voice in the wilderness" of which Isaiah spoke.[4] He is described as wearing the clothing of Elijah.[5] As Elijah opposed King Ahab, so John opposed Herod Antipas.[6] As Elijah incurred the enmity of Jezebel, so John incurred that of Antipas' wife.[7] John was the messenger spoken of in Malachi.[8] He set the stage for Jesus, for when Jesus came, the kingdom of God which John had been preaching was now at hand.[9] Jesus is expressly stated to have regarded John as the predicted Elijah.[10] Luke adds in the birth stories important references to John as Elijah the forerunner. John shall operate "in the spirit and power of Elijah."[11] He "shall go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways."[12]

A discordant note, however, is heard in the Fourth Gospel. For some reason its author quotes the Baptist explicitly testifying that he is not Elijah.[13] Even so, however, this gospel presents the Baptist as the forerunner announced by Isaiah.[14] The explanation may be that the author of the Fourth Gospel regarded Mal. 4:5 f and Sirach 48:10 f as saying that Elijah himself

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[1]Justin Dial. 8. [2]Ibid., 49. [3]Ibid., 49-51.

[4]Isa. 40:3; Mk. 1:4; Mt. 3:1; Lk. 3:1.

[5]II Kings 1:8; Mk. 1:6; Mt. 3:4.

[6]I Kings 17:1; 18:17-21. Mk. 6:17 f; Mt. 14:3 f; Lk. 3:19 f.

[7]I Kings 19:1 f; Mk. 6:19; Mt. 14:8.

[8]Mal. 3:1; Mk. 1:2; Mt. 11:10; Lk. 7:27.

[9]Mk. 1:15; Mt. 4:17.

[10]Mk. 9:11-13; Mt. 17:10-13; Mt. 11:14.

[11]Lk. 1:17. [12]Lk. 1:76. [13]Jn. 1:21. [14]Jn. 1:23, 27.

would be the Messiah. Such an idea may have been current among some Jews in the time when the gospel was written.

The baptism of Jesus as a sign.--The very term Messiah means "anointed," or "the anointed one." In the Old Testament the designation consistently applies to the Davidic kings, with the exception of the reference to Cyrus as the anointed one.[1] But from the early first century B.C. on, the term came to be applied to the ideal messianic king, being so used for the first time in the Book of Enoch.[2] It was regarded as one of the functions of the forerunner Elijah that he anoint the Messiah for his work, just as Elijah anointed Hazael and Jehu to be kings.[3] At least part of the reason why the church recalled Jesus' baptism at the hands of John appears to have been the desire to present him to the nation as one who had been anointed for the messianic office by Elijah (John the Baptist). As we have seen in another connection, this course created a problem at the same time that it settled another, for historically John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. Matthew saw the problem acutely enough to insert into the Markan record before him the detail concerning John's hesitation to baptize such a holy one as Jesus.[4] The author of the Fourth Gospel gets rid of the problem by keeping silence about Jesus' baptism. He depends upon other features of Jesus' life and work to provide the proof of Jesus' messiahship and divinity. But this was not the course that the church took in the earlier days, for all three synoptists recall Jesus' baptism and portray John as Elijah.

The synoptics furnish us with another proof, or perhaps sign, of Jesus' messianic character by recording the voice from heaven and the descent of the Spirit upon him. The Messiah, according to the prophecies of Isaiah, was to have the Spirit of God upon him. "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the gentiles."[5] "And the Spirit of

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[1] Isa. 45:1.

[2] Enoch 48:10; 52: 4; Pss. Sol. 17:36; 18:6, 8: IV Ezra 7:29; 12:32; Apoc. of Baruch 29:3, etc.

[3] I Kings 19:15 f; Sirach 48:8. Justin Dial. 8:49.

[4] Mt. 3:14 f.

[5] Isa. 42:1.

Jehovah shall rest upon him."[1] "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me."[2] The Testament of Judah prophesied, "And the heavens shall be opened upon him, to pour out the spirit, (even) the blessing of the Holy Father; and he shall pour out the spirit of grace upon you."[3] All three synoptics agree that so it happened at Jesus' baptism: the heavens were opened (Mark, rent asunder) and the Spirit as a dove descended upon him.[4] Moreover, the Testament of Levi predicted: "The heavens shall be opened, And from the temple of glory shall come upon him sanctification, With the Father's voice as from Abraham to Isaac. And the glory of the Most High shall be uttered over him, And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him."[5] Predictions such as this were also fulfilled at Jesus' baptism: God spoke to him, telling him, "Thou art my beloved Son."[6] The Jew of Celsus pours scorn upon this voice from heaven, asking, "Who heard a voice from heaven declaring you to be the Son of God?"[7] Matthew probably was aware of such an objection in his day, for he alters the statement from heaven to read in the third person, as a testimony to all who are present: "That is [not, You are] my beloved Son."[8] The Fourth Gospel, of course, offers no help here, for Jesus' baptism is unrecorded. Yet there is mentioned a divine voice from heaven on a later occasion, which some of the bystanders mistook for thunder, but others regarded as the voice of an angel speaking to him. Jesus, however, remarks, "This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes," meaning, it may hardly be doubted, that the divine voice was heard in order to furnish the bystanders a sign that Jesus was glorious in the eyes of the Father.[9]

Celsus' Jew raised still another objection at this point,

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[1]Isa. 11:2.

[2]Isa. 61:1. Luke says that Jesus quoted this passage in reference to himself: 4:18.

[3]T. of Judah 24:2 f. Cf. Ezek. 1:1; T. of Levi 2:6.

[4]Mk. 1:10; Mt. 3:16; Lk. 3:21 f. [5]T. Levi 18:6.

[6]Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22. [7]Origen Cels. i. 41.

[8]Mt. 3:17.

[9]Jn. 12:28-30.

claiming that no credible witness beheld the appearance of the Spirit descending as a dove and alighting upon Jesus.[1] There is no indication that the synoptists were aware of such a criticism in their time. But the Fourth Gospel seems to deal with it. Though no baptism of Jesus is mentioned in this gospel, yet the testimony of John the Baptist is introduced to furnish a credible witness to the reality of the Spirit's descent upon Jesus. The Baptist declares that God told him that the one upon whom he saw the Spirit descending and abiding was the Son of God. This he saw occur when Jesus came into his presence, and so he testified that the Son of God is Jesus.[2]

Whatever else the Transfiguration scene meant to the early church, it seems to have partaken of the nature of a sign and a fulfilled condition of the messianic age. For Jewish eschatology current in some circles in the first century required the return of Elijah and Moses before the end, for the idea appears in a passage in the Book of Revelation, and in the rabbinic commentary Debarim Rabbah, where a saying of Johanan b. Zakkai is quoted to the effect that Elijah and Moses will come before the end of the messianic age.[3] It can scarcely be accidental that the three synoptics' account of the appearance of Elijah and Moses at the time of the Transfiguration so fully satisfy this condition.[4]

At one point the synoptic writers reveal their consciousness of a Jewish criticism of Jesus for not giving proof of his messiahship, but they do not choose to answer it. This was the argument that if Jesus had really been the Messiah and divine, he would have furnished proof of that fact at the time of his crucifixion and prevented his suffering and death.[5] There can be no doubt that the synoptists were well acquainted with such a line of reasoning, for they all record the Jewish criticism, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe."[6]

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[1]Origen Cels. i. 41. [2]Jn. 1:29-34.

[3]Rev. 11:3; Debarim Rabbah, quoted in B. H. Branscomb, The Gospel of Mark, Moffatt Series (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1937), p. 162.

[4]Mk. 9:4; Mt. 17:3; Lk. 9:30. [5]Origen Cels.i.54; ii.33.

[6]Mk. 15:31 f; Mt. 24:41 f; Lk. 23:35.

The fact that Jesus suffered on to his death was regarded as proof that Jesus could not possibly have been the Messiah, for he was one well able to extricate himself from such a situation. But the synoptics give no answer to this charge at the point where it appears. There is an answer, of course, in the body of the synoptic gospels: Jesus willingly accepted the cup which his Father had given him to drink. Therefore he had no more thought of using his divine power to come down from the cross than to defend himself against the falsehoods of the witnesses who appeared against him at his trial. The Markan depiction of Jesus' death was that of an awful tragedy, yet tinged with noble grandeur. The Gospel of Luke, however, began to remove some of the tragic, and dwell more on the active obedience of Jesus in carrying out the will of the Father. Finally, John effaced all of the tragic, and depicted Jesus' death as a completely willing and unflinching surrender of his life in accordance with the divine plan of redemption.

The sign furnished by Jesus' prophetic powers.--The Jews quite generally believed that the Messiah would be a prophet, or at least possess the powers of a prophet, as one of the marks of his office. The Testament of Levi calls the Messiah a "prophet of the Most High,"[1] and the Testament of Benjamin terms him "an only-begotten prophet."[2] The same idea is set forth in the gospels. Simon the Pharisee thought within himself that if Jesus really were a prophet, he would have known the sinful nature of the woman who was anointing him.[3] The guards present at Jesus' trial before Caiaphas derided Jesus' claims to messiahship by striking him and in derision saying, "Prophesy, thou Christ, who is he that struck thee?"[4] The Fourth Gospel calls attention to Jesus' powers of prophecy as a proof that he was the Messiah: "From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."[5] Precisely the same idea is repeated for a second time in the next chapter.[6] Justin says that the power of prophecy is "the work of God," and that Jesus had this ability.[7]

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[1] T. Levi 8:15. [2] T. Benjamin 9:2. [3] Lk. 7:39.

[4] Mk. 14:65; Mt. 26:67 f; Lk. 22:64 f. [5] Jn. 13:9.

[6] Jn. 14:29. [7] Justin Apol. i. 12.

Second century Jews claimed that Jesus was devoid of this sign of messiahship. Justin alludes to their common assertion that Jesus did not know he had to suffer.[1] At one point Celsus' Jew admits, evidently in a light vein, that Jesus possessed the power of foreknowledge, but ascribes it to sorcery.[2] But everywhere else in his work he denies that Jesus had such a gift. If the reports of Jesus' foreknowledge of the designs against him were true, Judas and Peter would have been unable to carry through their betrayal and denials.[3] Why did they not "fear him as a god, and cease, the one from his intended treason, and the other from his perjury?"[4] When men are discovered, they are turned from their purposes.[5] Accordingly, this critic charges that the disciples "invented the statement that Jesus foreknew and foretold all that happened to him."[6] Origen springs to Jesus' defense with the claim that Phlegon in his Chronicles (now lost) testified that Jesus had a knowledge of future events, and that "the result corresponded to his predictions."[7] But Celsus' Jew raises another objection: if Jesus had really possessed such a power of foreknowledge, he would have avoided his destruction if he could, rather than plunge headlong into it.[8]

The number and variety of Jesus' predictions given in the gospels leads one to the conclusion that this power of Jesus was given special stress, not only to establish that Jesus had this divine power, but to weaken the criticism that he did not possess it. Of course many of the predictions are not recounted consciously to exhibit this power of Jesus, but are introduced incidentally to serve other purposes. But their number is so impressive that there must have been a conscious attempt to illustrate and establish Jesus' powers of prediction. He predicted the rise of false Christs.[9] A like prophecy is concluded with the significant words, "Behold, I have told you (Mark adds, 'all

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[1] Justin Dial. 99. [2] Origen Cels. ii. 14.

[3] Ibid., ii. 19. [4] Ibid., ii. 18.

[5] Ibid., ii. 19. [6] Ibid., ii. 13. Cf. ii. 15.

[7] Ibid., ii. 14. [8] Ibid., ii. 17.

[9] Mk. 13:5 f; Mt. 24:4 f, 11; Lk. 21:8.

things') beforehand."[1] Jesus foreknew Peter's denial.[2] He forecast his disciples' desertion.[3] He foretold Judas' betrayal.[4] Matthew and Luke's accounts of the arrest show that Jesus fully knew what was really transpiring.[5] Jesus' predictions of his suffering, death, and resurrection are especially numerous.[6] Moreover, he predicted Jerusalem's fall and the destruction of the temple.[7] Matthew and Luke add Jesus' lament over the doomed city.[8] Luke includes the account of Jesus weeping over it,[9] and two further prophecies of the horrible future in store for the city.[10]

The Fourth Gospel goes to especial pains to exhibit Jesus' powers of omniscience and foreknowledge. This ability exacted from Nathanael an amazed confession that Jesus was the Son of God.[11] It produced the same result in the Samaritan woman and her fellow-townsmen.[12] Jesus told things in advance to his disciples for the express purpose of proving his messiahship to them when they saw them come to pass later.[13] And yet he dismisses this power of his as one of his lesser abilities.[14] He knew the defection of Judas not just a few hours before the actual betrayal, as in the synoptics, but from the very beginning.[15] He not only prophesied his own death, but the very manner of it, and this also from a

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[1]Mk. 13:21-23; Mt. 24:23-25.

[2]Mk. 14:29-31; Mt. 26:33-35; Lk. 22:31-34.

[3]Mk. 14:27; Mt. 26:31.

[4]MK. 14:18; Mt. 26:21; Lk. 22:21; Mk. 14:41; Mt. 26:45.

[5]Mt. 26:50; Lk.22:48.

[6]Mk.8:31-33; Mt. 16:21-23; Lk. 9:22; Mk. 9:12; Mt. 17:12; Mk. 9:31; Mt. 17:22 f; Lk. 9:44; Mk. 10:33 f; Mt. 20:18 f; Lk. 18:31-33; Mk. 14:8; Mt. 26:12; Mk. 14:21; Mt. 26:24; Lk. 22:22; Mk. 16:7; Lk.24:6 f; Mt. 26:2; 26:18.

[7]Mk. 13:2-20; Mt. 24:2-22; Lk. 21:6-23.

[8]Mt. 23:37-39; Lk. 13:34 f. [9]Lk. 19:41-44.

[10]Lk. 21:24; 23:29-31. [11]Jn. 1:47-49. [12]Jn.4:19,29,39.

[13]Jn. 13:19; 14:29. [14]Jn. 1:50.

[15]Jn. 6:64; 70 f; 13:18 f, 21.

very early date.[1] He foreknew everything that would transpire in connection with his condemnation and death.[2]

In addition to this power of forecasting, Jesus had an insight that was more than human. He was able to perceive inwardly the thoughts and intentions of his enemies.[3] He also was able to read the thoughts of his disciples.[4] The Fourth Gospel tells us that he "knew all men," and "needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in [a] man."[5] He knew "in himself" that his disciples murmured against his teaching on one occasion.[6] Moreover, he "knew from the beginning who they were that believed not."[7]

Mark has sixteen references to Jesus' powers of foreknowledge and insight; Luke eighteen, and Matthew twenty-two. Therefore only Matthew is significant of a growth in the desire to exhibit this sign of Jesus' messiahship. But John quite clearly shows a trend toward making Jesus' powers in this regard increasingly noteworthy.

Jesus Was Not an Inglorious Figure

Contrast between Jewish messianic expectations and Jesus' life.--We have already seen how the Jews pointed to the lowly and unimpressive features of Jesus' background and life to ridicule the Christian affirmation of his messiahship. There can be no doubt that Jesus actually had confined his ministry chiefly to the low-born and dispossessed, and to the classes looked down upon as morally inferior. He preached "good news" to the poor, and urged the virtues of humility, modesty, and meekness. Only in one instance, however, do the gospels say that Jesus himself was meek and lowly, and this is found only in Matthew.[8] And only Matthew quotes Zechariah to explain the lowly manner of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.[9] To be sure, John also records the prophecy, but

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[1] Jn. 3:14; 8:28; 12:32 f. [2] Jn. 18:4.

[3] Mk. 2:8; Mt. 9:4; Lk. 5:22; Mk. 12:15; Mt. 22:18; Lk. 20:23; Mt. 12:25; Lk. 11:17; Mt. 12:15; Lk. 6:18.

[4] Mk. 8:17; Mt. 16:8; Lk. 9:47. [5] Jn. 2:24 f.

[6] Jn. 6:61. [7] Jn. 6:64. [8] Mt. 11:29.

[9] Mt. 21:4 f, quoting Zech. 9:9.

significantly deletes the word "lowly."[1] Precisely why the gospels do not say more about Jesus' lowly and meek manner of life cannot be fully decided, but it might have been due to a desire to overcome this feature of his ministry to Israel, for the Jews anticipated a Messiah of an altogether different bearing.

For a time at least, some quarters in Jewish thought envisioned a Messiah who was meek in character. Psalm 45:4, very indecisive in the Hebrew, was interpreted by Targum and the Septuagint as applying to the Messiah. Zephaniah 2:3 also lent itself to such a view. And this was true of Zechariah 9:9. Therefore we find the testament of Judah speaking of the Messiah as "walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness."[2] Charles says, however, that in the Jewish literature from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D. meekness was not regarded as an attribute of the Messiah.[3] The reference to meekness in the Messiah found in the Testament of Dan is undoubtedly one of the Testaments' many Christian additions.[4] Jewish thought of the period under discussion fixed itself upon a messianic figure who would be terrible and fearsome; who would right the world's wrongs, judge the wicked, wreak vengeance on the gentiles, banish sin and wickedness from the earth, and gather the scattered children of Israel into a united people free of all foes. "I will transform the earth and make it a blessing."[5] The Messiah "shall loosen the reins of the strong, and break the teeth of the sinners."[6] "The word of his mouth slays all sinners, and all the unrighteous are destroyed from before his face."[7] He will wreak a terrible vengeance on those who oppress the common people.[8] He will return the goods of the dispossessed to them.[9] Those whom he has judged he will destroy.[10] The wicked nations of the heathen will

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[1] Jn. 12:14 f.

[2] T. Judah 24:1.

[3] R. H. Charles, "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), ii. 324.

[4] T. Dan. 6:9.

[5] Enoch:45:4.

[6] Enoch 46:4.

[7] Enoch 62:2.

[8] Enoch 62:10 f.

[9] Sib. Oracles v. 415-30.

[10] IV Ezra 12:33.

suffer this fate,[1] and the Messiah will go so far as to slay "the last leader" of the Roman empire with His own hand.[2]

Matthew and Luke testify that John the Baptist preached the same kind of Messiah. "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"[3] "Even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."[4] The Messiah's "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire."[5] Jewish literature also repeatedly states that the Messiah will be a king sent from God, who will put an end to all wars. The Sibylline Books say this will be done by destroying some peoples and by making permanent treaties with others.[6] One of the Psalms of Solomon says that the Messiah will subject the heathen nations to his rule. Thereby injustice and tyranny will be brought to an end.[7]

That the Messiah would be a great Judge was also a popular notion. "On that day the Elect One shall sit on the throne of glory and shall try their works."[8] "But for the sinners there is judgment impending with me, so that I shall destroy them from the face of the earth."[9] As a judge the Messiah possesses righteousness,[10] wisdom,[11] and power.[12] The Gospel of Matthew also teaches that the Messiah will function as a judge of all men.[13]

These functions of his will cause "all who dwell on the face of the earth" to "fall and worship before him."[14] Even "the kings and the mighty and all who possess the earth shall bless and extol him who rules over all."[15]

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[1] IV Ezra 13:37 f. [2] Apoc. of Baruch 40:1 f.

[3] Mt. 3:7; Lk. 3:7. [4] Mt. 3:10; Lk. 3:9.

[5] Mt. 3:12; Lk. 3:17. [6] Sib. Oracles iii. 652-66.

[7] Pss. Sol. 17. [8] Enoch 45:3.

[9] Enoch 45:6. Cf. 49:3 f; 51:2; 55:4; 61:8 f; 62:2 f; 69:27; IV Ezra 12:32; T. Levi 18:2; Pss. Sol. 17:28-51.

[10] Enoch 38:2; 39:6; 46:3; 53:6. Cf. Ps. 45:4-7; Isa. 11:3-5.

[11] Enoch 49:1, 3; 51:3. [12] Enoch 49:3; 62:6.

[13] Mt. 25:31 f. [14] Enoch 48:5. Cf. 61:10-13.

[15] Enoch 62:6. Cf. 62:9.

The church proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah to a people whose imaginations were fired with such concepts as these. Needless to say, Jesus' earthly life did not accord with such delineations of the Messiah's life and activity, and Jews were not slow to point out the wide discrepancy. Matthew and Luke admit that even John the Baptist was in grave doubt whether Jesus therefore was actually the Messiah: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"[1]

The Christian doctrine of two advents.--We have abundant evidence that second century Jews kept at this point with great persistence. Their argument was, "The prophets declare the coming one to be a mighty potentate, Lord of all nations and armies."[2] But Jesus was "dishonorable and inglorious."[3] Justin devotes a very considerable space to rebuttal of this objection of his supposedly Jewish opponents. He does so by propounding the doctrine of two advents of the Christ: one in meekness and humility; the second in great glory and power. First the Christ must come to be rejected and die; then he must return to set up his kingdom and reign forever. This line of defense, of course, was an admission that Jesus' life was not fully messianic in nature. It was messianic only under the form of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, but in no other respect. The full proof of Jesus' messiahship is therefore not furnished from history. The final proof is projected into the future, when the second coming will take place. In other words, on a historical basis there is little proof. The "proof" consists of faith that the predictions of the glorious Messiah yet will take place.

Justin divides the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah according to these two advents. "Some have reference to the first advent of Christ, in which he is preached as inglorious, obscure, and of mortal appearance: but others had reference to his second advent, when he shall appear in glory and above the clouds."[4] How important and necessary it was for Justin to establish this point is seen in his repeated emphasis of it throughout his Dialogue.[5] To bolster his case further he finds in the two

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[1] Mt. 11:3; Lk. 7:18-20. [2] Origen Cels. ii. 29.

[3] Justin Dial. 32. [4] Justin Dial. 14.

[5] Ibid., 31, 32, 36, 48, 52, 110, 111, 118.

goats a symbol and type of the two advents.[1] And he claims that "it was prophesied by Jacob the patriarch that there would be two advents of Christ, and that in the first he would suffer."[2] Justin's real job is to prove the first advent of suffering, humiliation, and death. As we shall see in another connection, he calls up a long series of prophecies to try to establish the doctrine of a suffering Messiah.[3]

Origen, too, takes refuge in the doctrine of the two advents to escape the telling attacks of Celsus' Jew. "Now it escaped the notice of Celsus, and of the Jew whom he has introduced, and of all who are not believers in Jesus, that the prophecies speak of two advents of Christ: the former characterized by human suffering and humility....and the latter distinguished only by glory and divinity, having no element of human infirmity intermingled with its divine greatness."[4]

Tertullian points out that the trouble with the Jews is not their denial of the coming of the Messiah, but "their lack of wisdom and understanding," which has led them to claim but one advent for him.[5] He also answers Marcion by quoting a long series of prophecies to show that a first advent in humility and shame was predicted.[6] In another work he maintains that the clue to all the errors of the Jews is this refusal to see that the Messiah was prophesied as coming in two advents.[7] The pseudonymous Recognitions of Clement also shows that the doctrine of the two advents was employed in refutation of the Jews.[8] And Irenaeus makes the statement that the whole church everywhere confesses and believes that the Holy Spirit "proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents."[9]

The attitude of the synoptists on this matter is mixed. While all three teach a second coming (or as some scholars have it, an announcement by Jesus of the Messiah not identical with

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[1] Ibid., 111.

[2] Ibid., 52. Justin relies on Gen. 49:5, 8-11, 18, 24, verses which seem most indecisive to us.

[3] Justin Dial. 90-105. [4] Origen Cels. i, 56. Cf. ii. 29.

[5] Tertullian Apol. 21. [6] Tertullian Against Marcion iii.2

[7] Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 14.

[8] Recog. of Clement i. 49; i. 69. [9] Irenaus Heres. I.x.1.

himself), they also seek to show Jesus' earthly life as gloriously messianic, and not merely under the pattern of the suffering servant. Mark and Matthew certainly teach Jesus as the Messiah coming in two advents in the narrative of Jesus' trial before Caiaphas. Jesus confesses his present messiahship and also the second advent in glory.[1]

Mark seems to present Jesus as a strange, awesome figure, fully possessed of supernatural and messianic powers. Some of these powers, however, such as miracle-working, are represented to have been kept more or less secret. And Jesus is said to have commanded demons who knew him, and his disciples, after Peter's confession, to refrain from telling who he was. This gospel, however, does not make a conscious attempt to surround Jesus' life and activity with messianic signs in the way that Matthew and Luke do. In the later synoptics the miracles are much oftener public evidences of his messiahship and divinity. Jesus' earthly life is frankly messianic and of divine character by the inclusion of the stories of his miraculous birth, accompanied by angelic appearances and pronouncements, a heavenly portent, the visit of the worshipping magi, and the recognitions of the unusual nature of this child.

All three gospels, however, teach a second advent of Jesus in glory. This shows that they could not regard Jesus' messianic work as fully accomplished in his earthly life. Therefore, they could not report, as John did, Jesus saying, "It is finished." They appear to have delineated Jesus fairly consistently under the figure of the suffering servant. Reserved for the second coming are a number of messianic functions which were not accomplished in the first coming. One of these is the role of judge. Mark is strangely silent on this point, however.[2]

If generalizations on the attitudes of the synoptics on this matter are possible, it appears that Mark regarded Jesus' life from his baptism on as messianic, but that he chose not to reveal this fact until his entry into Jerusalem.

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[1] Mk. 14:62; Mt. 26:64.

[2] Mt. 24:40 f; Lk. 17:34 f; Mt. 25:14-30; 25:31-46; Lk. 19:11-28; Acts 2:40; 24:25. Cf. II Cor. 5:10.

To this point Mark appears to hold the single advent theory. But his inclusion of the little apocalypse and Jesus' statement before Caiaphas show that he also held to a dual-advent view. This can only mean that the author of this gospel brought together materials that were not wholly consistent with one another. There is no effort to depict Jesus' earthly life as a complete fulfillment of the messianic role, nor is a conscious effort made to show that it was only a first phase in humility of a messianic activity which is divided into two appearances to Israel. The fact that no choice has been made even partially toward the one view or the other reveals that the author was conscious of no logical discrepancy and of no Jewish criticisms which forced him to a definite choice.

The gospel of Matthew shows a leaning toward the two-advent explanation. More fully than the other gospels it exhibits the lowliness and meekness of Jesus. And yet this gospel does not show that Jesus was as secretive about his messianic nature as he is depicted in Mark. Moreover, the inclusion of the birth stories seems to show that Matthew regarded Jesus as the Messiah not by virtue of his selection by God at his baptism, but by virtue of a miraculous birth. Matthew, then, seems to regard the earthly life as fully messianic, but as the first phase of a dual role, first in humility, and finally in great glory. Not all the pericopes selected by Matthew fit into this portrayal, but the tendency to a choice toward the two-advent explanation is apparent.

Luke shows the other trend. The secretive and lowly aspects of Jesus' earthly life are diminished in number and pointedness. One of the two Markan prophecies of the second coming (followed by Matthew) is eliminated: "From henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God," but there is no mention of his coming on the clouds of heaven.[1] From even before his birth Jesus is seen to be the Messiah, and the predictions about him in the birth stories seem to view his life when he attains to manhood as a full messianic activity which requires no second advent to complete what is not accomplished in his earthly life. Indeed, the work of the Messiah is viewed as a spiritual activity and a redemptive accomplishment for the

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[1] Lk. 22:69.

remission of sins rather than a gathering of Israel into one nation as popular messianic hopes had envisioned the Messiah's work. Under this view, no second coming would be really necessary, for Jesus' sufferings and death were sufficient for the redemption of Irael's sins. The references to the second coming which remain in the parallel section to Mark's little apocalypse do not include the Markan and Matthean prediction of gathering the elect from the four winds. Precisely what the Messiah will do is not indicated, but in several places it is implied that he will be a judge. The most explicit passage, however, says that when the Son of man comes the believers' redemption has come.[1] Precisely what this means is not brought out, however. It appears that the second coming is no more than the announcement of the end of the world. Those who have accepted redemption wrought for them by Jesus' sufferings and death and who have awaited the end without letting their hearts become "overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life," will be translated into eternal bliss when the Messiah appears and the end comes. Therefore we may conclude that in the view of Luke-Acts the complete messianic functions with the exception perhaps of judgment, were accomplished in Jesus' lifetime, and so the work of Luke is quite thoroughly controlled by a single advent concept. Acts contains only two references to the second coming, and neither of these implies that further messianic activity is reserved for this coming.[2] And so the gospel of Luke is particularly interested in bringing into high light the glorious in Jesus' earthly life, and to paint out the inglorious and humble. Therefore this is a gospel predominantly single-advent in theory. The second advent is reduced in importance to such an extent that it is merely the mark of the end of the world and of the gathering up of all those faithful Christians who have stood the fiery test of persecution and tribulation until their deliverance.

The Johannine single-advent delineation.--The Fourth Gospel goes even beyond Luke in the trend toward a single-advent theory. To this writer the messianic glory was manifested during Jesus' earthly life with great convincingness. There is not a

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[1] Lk. 21:28. [2] Acts 1:11; 3:21.

line to suggest an earthly life of humiliation. Jesus' death was but a stage in his glorification.[1] He was Messiah not by virtue of a baptism at the hands of John the Baptist (Elijah), or because he was of divine-human birth, but by virtue of being the pre-existent divine Logos, or Son of God, who became flesh. Therefore his advent was from heaven, and his glory began even before the incarnation.[2] Men clearly beheld his glory when he was on earth.[3] Jesus made no secret of his messiahship at any time, as Mark says he did. Indeed, Jesus even comes to the point of haggling with his opponents over his messiahship and divinity.[4]

> Wernle points out that "John was merely the apologist who consistently drew all the consequences from the proposition that Jesus was the Messiah. Had it depended upon him, the Christians might entirely have discarded the proof from the Parousia while retaining the hope of the Parousia itself.[5]

There are not two advents. "When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?"[6] This might serve as a motto for the whole book. All the signs of messiahship were adequately illustrated in Jesus' historical life, and refuge need not be taken in the hope of a second advent to supply the fulfillment of the predictions of glory and power. Sinlessness, omniscience, omnipotence, and messianic signs are all present. Jesus' death was not a curse, but a voluntary act of love for man's deliverance from sin.

In this gospel the second coming appears to be altered to the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. "He shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever."[7] "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you."[8] "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth."[9] From the point of time when this gospel was written, the Spirit had already been given.

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[1]Jn. 7:39; 12:23; 13:32; 17:1, 5.

[2]Jn. 1:1-18; 10:30; 17:5.

[3]Jn. 1:14; 2:11; 11:4, 40; 12:41; 17:22. [4]Jn. 5-10.

[5]Paul Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity, trans. G. A. Bienemann (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903-04), II, 42.

[6]Jn. 7:31. [7]Jn. 14:16. [8]Jn. 16:7. [9]Jn. 16:13.

Accordingly, the second coming has been accomplished, not as the early believers supposed, in the early return of Jesus, but in the early gift of the Spirit to his followers.

On the other hand, several passages seem to teach a second coming of Jesus. "I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."[1] "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you."[2] "I go away, and I come unto you."[3] "A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me."[4] It may be that these passages do not refer to a second coming, but to the resurrection appearances, and that Jesus' going to the Father is in his death rather than in his ascension.[5] On the other hand, this interpretation seems in part refuted by the statement to Mary Magdalene after the resurrection, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father."[6] It does not seem possible, therefore, to bring the Fourth Gospel's statements into a consistent whole. But in the main there can be no question that one of the main tasks which the author set before him was the establishment of Jesus' earthly life as glorious and not inglorious. With a consistent portrayal of this theme there would be no necessity of a second advent in glory. If the passages cited above which appear to teach a second advent actually do this, they announce a coming which is all glorious in a sense that the first coming was not. If a second coming is taught, it is in no sense for the purpose of revealing a glory not found in the earthly life of Jesus, or for completing a messianic career only begun in the first coming. Jesus' messianic functions were completed on the cross, and he could say at the moment of death, "It is finished."[7] If this gospel announces a second coming, it is for the sole purpose of receiving the believers in him unto himself, that where he is they may be also.[8] It will not be a manifestation of himself to the world, but only to his believers, and hence will be of entirely different nature from the second coming announced in Mark and Matthew.[9] But we must again bear in mind that the appearance

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[1]Jn. 14:3. [2]Jn. 14:18. [3]Jn. 14:28.

[4]Jn. 16:16. Cf. 16:17-22. [5]Jn. 17:11, 13.

[6]Jn. 20:17. [7]Jn. 19:30. [8]Jn. 14:3.

[9]Jn. 14:22 f.

promised may refer to the resurrection appearances rather than to a second coming.

Fluctuation of belief in imminence of the second advent.-- The imminence of the second coming was a cardinal doctrine of the earliest Believers. "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished."[1] But by the year 50, if not earlier, Christians had begun to show concern over the delay in the coming. Some Believers had died in the meantime, and this did not accord with the way they thought it would be. Paul is forced to deal with these misgivings among his converts at Thessalonica, that they "may sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope." Jesus' coming is imminent, and those who have died will be the first to rise in the air to meet him on his return, and then "we that are alive."[2] The first letter to the Corinthians also urges the imminence of Christ's appearing.[3] Paul closes this letter with a stock expression, or prayer, of the Believers of that time: "Maranatha (O Lord, come)!"[4] Paul's views by the time he wrote II Thessalonians seem to have been tempered somewhat. Those who believed that "the day of the Lord is just at hand" are told that such is not the case, for the "man of sin" must first be revealed.[5] Therefore those who have ceased working and are in idleness awaiting the day of the Lord are to desist, and return to a more normal form of life.[6]

After the year 50 the hope of the second coming seems to have dwindled very fast, and the conviction that it would take place within the generation of Jesus gradually gave way to the assertion that no one knew the time, not even the Messiah himself, but only God.[7] But the fact that no one could say when the coming would take place gave no follower of Jesus the right to say, "My lord tarrieth," and proceed to live his life without ceaseless precautions against being caught unawares when the coming would take place.[8] These items from early tradition show

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[1] Mk. 13:30; Mt. 24:34; Lk. 21:32; Mk. 9:1; Mt. 16:28.

[2] I Thess. 4:13-18.

[3] I Cor. 1:7-9; 7:28-31. Cf. Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 4:5.

[4] I Cor. 16:22. [5] II Thess. 2:2-5. [6] II Thess. 3:8-12.

[7] Mk. 13:32 f; Mt. 24:36.

[8] Mk. 13:33-37; Mt. 24:42-44; Lk. 12:39 f; Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 17:26 f; Mt. 24:45-51; Lk. 12:42-46; Lk. 21:34-36; Mt. 25:1-13.

the problems that the early leaders of the church were faced with in order to keep the Christian communities under control.

We have noted in an earlier discussion how the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple revived the hopes of the Messiah's coming among the Jews for a period of fifty or sixty years thereafter. This terrible event also re-awakened the Christian hopes of Jesus' return, and the church appears for a short time, possibly twenty years, to have been on fire with the expectancy of the second advent. Therefore the three synoptics, all written around 70 or thereafter, contain vivid hopes along this line which could hardly have been there if they were written around the year 60. The end will not take place during the actual war,[1] but "immediately after" those days the heavenly portents will appear, and then "the Son of man will come on the clouds with great power and glory."[2] But again this expectation failed to materialize. Luke, therefore, made certain minor changes in the materials which Mark and Matthew employed. He did not say that that generation would not taste of death till they saw "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," but, "till they see the kingdom of God."[3] This means, of course, that the coming of Jesus in that generation is removed in favor of the establishment of the church. This is what they will see accomplished before their generation dies out. He likewise avoids reporting the saying that the heavenly portents will appear "immediately after" the destruction of Jerusalem.[4] He alters the prophecy that "this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished" by dropping the word "these," thereby rendering the passage quite meaningless and innocuous.[5] By these means Luke was able to preserve the doctrine of the second coming and avoid the excision of the apocaltyptic materials of the tradition, even though he did his work at a date so late that historical cir-

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[1] Mk. 13:7 f; Mt. 24:6-8; Lk. 21:9-11.

[2] Mk. 13:24-27; Mt. 24:29-31.

[3] Lk. 9:27. Cf. Mk. 9:1; Mt. 16:28.

[4] Lk. 21:25. Cf. Mk. 13:24; Mt. 24:29.

[5] Lk. 21:32. Cf. Mk. 13:30; Mt. 24:34.

cumstances forced alteration of the traditional hopes of the Christians as to the imminence of Jesus' return as the glorious Messiah. He quietly removes all datings which by his time have proved unfounded, or makes the prophecy as to what will happen in Jesus' generation refer not to his return, but to the establishment of the church, which really did happen in that generation, and from Luke's perspective was historically true. This does not mean that Luke was tampering with scripture. To him Mark was not the gospel. His was "the gospel." Mark was but one of his sources, and if he found his sources untrue to the events of subsequent history, he felt no hesitation in making the necessary adjustments.

At a still later date the Fourth Gospel was composed. As we have seen, it practically eliminates, if not completely so, the idea of a second coming. The extensive apocalyptic elements of the synoptics are avoided. But the author reckons with the fact that "sorrow hath filled the heart" of the believers because of Jesus' long absence. Therefore he calls attention to the gift of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whose coming was conditioned on Jesus' departure to the Father.[1] The church is therefore not without the divine presence: the indwelling Spirit has taken Christ's place in his absence. We can hardly avoid the conclusion that John is consciously trying to overcome the failure of the church's belief in Jesus' early return by leading it to see that the second coming was really the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit's coming was fully known in the day in which he wrote to have been an accomplished fact. Accordingly, the church misunderstood Jesus when it said that he taught his own early return within that very generation. What he really had taught was not his own return, but the coming of the Spirit.

The line which John took was not the one which the major part of the church adopted, however. In the face of the cooling off of the rank and file in the churches most leaders endeavored to whip them up to renewed fervor and hope. James admonishes them thus: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.....The coming of the Lord is at hand." He calls attention to the patience of the farmer who waits for his crop,

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[1]Jn. 16:5-7.

and to the patience of Job.[1] The author of Hebrews tells his readers, "Ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."[2] The Book of Revelation repeatedly urges that the time is at hand,[3] and closes with the prayer in use as early as Paul, if not earlier; "Come, Lord Jesus."[4] The First Epistle of Peter urges Christians to put aside riotous living and be watchful, for "the end of all things is at hand."[5] The author of I John says, "We know that it is the last hour," for many anti-christs had appeared.[6] The Epistle of Titus urges sober living, and watchfulness "for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."[7] I and II Timothy call on people to live soberly "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," and avoid giving up this doctrine for some other. But we note that the author is unwilling to urge this on the grounds of its imminence. It will take place "in its own times."[8]

Other Christian literature also urged that the last times were at hand.[9] I Clement reiterated the imminence of the coming, in answer to many who were beginning to doubt it.[10] The writer of II Clement faced the same situation.[11] The Apology of Aristides holds over men the threat of the judgment of the last times when Jesus the Messiah will come, but does not date it.[12] And II

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[1]James 5:7-11. [2]Hebrews 10:36-39, incorporating Hab.2:3 f.

[3]Rev. 1:3, 7; 3:11; 22:10, 12. [4]Rev. 22:20.

[5]I Peter 4:7. [6]I John 2:18. [7]Titus 2:12 f.

[8]I Tim. 6:14 f; II Tim. 4:1-5.

[9]Ignatius, Ephesians 11; Ignatius Ep. to Polycarp 3; Ep. of Barnabas 4.

[10]I Clement 23.

[11]II Clement 6, 7, 11.

[12]Apol. of Aristides 17.

Peter is exercised over the appearance of mockers who have challenged the doctrine of the second coming by calling it "a cunningly devised fable," and pointing out that, all Christian pronouncements to the contrary, the world goes on as it has always done.[1] The author attempts to meet the challenge of these scoffers by saying that the delay is due to the long-suffering of God. Moreover, he adopts the subterfuge of saying that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," ignoring the fact that the prediction of the Messiah's return was in terms of man's time, not God's.[2] The main burden of this epistle was to reestablish the rapidly waning belief of the church in the imminence of the second coming.[3]

It appears that the church along with the synagogue dropped its hopes of the Messiah's imminence at the conclusion of the terrible Bar Kochba uprising. Christian authors thereafter speak often of the second coming, as Justin does in his Dialogue, but never with the suggestion that it is about to take place. Ever since that time the church has retained its belief in the return of Christ, but it is an ineffective dogma. In early days it was the decisive doctrine, and kept the Christian communities in a state of wild expectancy, but that day passed permanently away by 140 A.D., and has had no reality excepting in isolated sects down the centuries.

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[1] II Peter 1:16; 3:3 f. [2] II Peter 3:8 f.

[3] II Peter 1:11, 19; 3:1-17.

CHAPTER III

JESUS WAS NOT A DECEIVER

His Life Fully Prophesied

The practice of quoting scripture to support one's views was not an innovation of the church, but was general among the Pharisees.[1] To the Jews the Old Testament was a book containing the divine will and law. It was the source of all knowledge. Hence it furnished a vast number of proof-texts to give authenticity to all teachings and injunctions which the scribes and other religious leaders urged upon the nation. The sacred scriptures reached an even greater degree of importance in Jewish life after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple had forced the end of the sacrificial system. "Zion hath been taken from us; and we have nothing now save the Mighty One and His Law."[2]

Christian application of rabbinical methods to scripture.— The Hebrew scriptures were also treasured by the Christians, for they were rich in types and promises of things which had now come to pass. As time went on, the rabbinical methods of exegesis borrowed from the Jews by the Christian teacher and preacher furnished an increasing number of proof texts to fortify the Christian cause, and hence the Old Testament's value for the church was increasingly enhanced. Parkes argues that even though the Jews used the scriptures in fully as far-fetched a manner as the Christians, yet there was a difference in that the Jews used midrash to illustrate an accepted truth, whereas the Christians used this method to establish doctrinal truths otherwise not admitted.[3] It is questionable whether this contention can be proved,

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[1] E.g., Assumption of Moses v. 3. Cf. M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings (New York: Harpers, 1938), p. 114.

[2] Apoc. of Baruch 85:3.

[3] J. Parkes, "Rome, Pagan and Christian," in Judaism and Christianity, ed. W. O. E. Oesterley & H. Loewe (1937), II, 129 f.

however.

The excesses to which this method of proving Jesus' messiahship went, with the resultant obscuration of the historical facts about Jesus' life and message, is aptly stated by Wernle. It led to an

> increasing alienation from Jesus Himself. It is an awful spectacle: here we have theologians fighting for Jesus, taking up arms in His defence, exalting Him, deifying Him, and at the same time inventing texts in His favour, transforming and perverting others, and all the while they never asked who He was in reality and what His aims were. The subject of all this anti-Jewish apologetic is never really Jesus, but the titles of Messiah, Son of God, and the like.[1]

Excesses in the employment of allegory on both sides rendered it impossible to get at the real truth of what the Old Testament said. Celsus upbraids both equally for this practice.[2] To further confuse matters, the gnostics of the second century took up the method, and bade fair to outshine all others at it, especially the Valentinians.[3]

Justin furnishes as good an example as any to illustrate what the allegorical method could do with the Old Testament. He assures us that Jesus "is addressed in the writings of the prophets in one way or another as Wisdom, the Day, the East, a Sword, a Stone, a Rod, Jacob, and Israel."[4] As if this were not enough, he informs his Jewish opponent that the prophets in addition called Jesus the Angel of the great counsel, a Man, Son of man, a Child, Joseph, Judah, a Star, the Suffering One, a Flower, and a Corner-Stone.[5] Justin carries on by finding a number of types of Jesus in the scriptures.[6] The eight passengers on the ark were symbolic of Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the eighth day after his resurrection.[7] The twelve bells on the high priest's robe were the symbol of the twelve apostles.[8] Barnabas

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[1]Paul Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity, trans. G.A. Bienemann (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903-04), II, 52.

[2]Origen Cels. iv. 48.

[3]Irenaeus Heres. I. viii. Tertullian, Prescr. against Heretics 38.

[4]Justin Dial. 100.

[5]Ibid.,126.

[6]Ibid., 42.

[7]Ibid., 138.

[8]Ibid., 42.

also edifies his readers with types which he finds, such as the scape-goat,[1] the red heifer,[2] and the number 318.[3] The apostle Paul much earlier indulged in the same practices. The two sons of Abraham are an allegory for the Old and the New Covenants.[4] The promise to Abraham's seed refers to Christ, for it does not say "seeds, as of many."[5] In fact, these processes were almost as extravagant as those of the schoolmen in the Middle Ages, who found allusions to the Virgin Mary all through the Old Testament, Albertus Magnus taking the prize with eighty-one names indicative of her grace and functions. Bonaventura found types of her in Jacob's ladder, Noah's ark, the brazen serpent, the star of Balaam, Gideon's son, etc. Matthew was the most unrestrained of the gospel writers in finding far-fetched allusions to Jesus in the Old Testament, such as his scripture passages for explaining the residence of Joseph and Mary in Nazareth, the slaughtering of the innocents, and the Field of Blood.[6]

But despite such extravagances, it cannot be said that Christians either of the first or second centuries outdid their Jewish adversaries in this regard. The most notorious Christian passage, Barnabas' explanation of the hidden meaning behind the statement in scripture that Abraham circumcized three hundred and eighteen of the men of his household,[7] still falls far short of a Baraitha of the Tannaitic period, which describes the basis on which five Christians were condemned to death. One of the five, named Thoda, was condemned because Ps. 50:23 reads, "Whoso sacrificeth Thoda [=thanksgiving] honoreth me." The other four are condemned to die by equally monstrous abuses of scripture.[8]

When the allegorical method went on almost unchecked within the church, becoming especially well-entrenched in the Alexandrian school, the Jews in time began to repudiate it, evidently because it served the Christian case better than their own. Allegory was found far more effective in proving something

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[1] Ep. of Barnabas 7. [2] Barnabas 8. [3] Barnabas 9.

[4] Gal. 4:21-31. [5] Gal. 3:16.

[6] Mt. 2:23, quoting Isa. 11:1; Mt. 2:16-18, quoting Jer. 31:15; Mt. 27:7-10, quoting Zech. 11:12 f.

[7] Barnabas 9.

[8] Sanh. 43a.

than in disproving it and upholding orthodoxy. Midrash was not given up altogether by the Jews, but a sharp distinction was drawn between plain and homiletical exposition of a canonical sentence. The simple meaning came to be stressed more and more. It became a fixed principle that no scripture ever loses its plain meaning.[1] Repeatedly the Rabbis censured those who "throw off the yoke of the law, break the covenant, and insolently interpret the Torah."[2]

Prodigious use of scripture to prove Jesus' messiahship.--The second century Christian writers uniformly appeal to scripture to prove the messiahship of Jesus, especially in their anti-Jewish writings. "Ye understand well the sacred scriptures, and ye have looked very earnestly into the oracles of God."[3] The prophets "lived according to Christ Jesus," and waited for him to appear.[4] The lost Dialogue Between Jason and Papiscus "proved that the predictions regarding Christ fitly apply to Jesus."[5] A fragment of the lost Preaching of Peter shows that Jesus' entire life was reproduced from the Old Testament: "Without the scripture we say nothing..... We having opened the books of the prophets which we had found, sometimes expressed by parables, sometimes by riddles, and sometimes directly," the events of Jesus' life.[6]

In the Epistle of Barnabas, Justin's Dialogue, and Irenaeus' Apostolic Preaching the gospels are not the foundation of the case put forward for Jesus' messiahship, but Old Testament prophecies. Harris contends that for them the real gospel was a Book of Testimonies, a collection of scriptural proof-passages designed for establishing Jesus' messiahship on the basis of the Jewish scriptures. The hypothesis of the existence of such a book among Jewish Christians has been maintained since

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[1] Shabb. 63a.

[2] T. Sanh. XII, 9. See many like passages collected by A. Büchler, Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), pp. 97-99. Cf. S. W. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1937), I, 248.

[3] I Clement 52. [4] Ignatius Magnesians 8 f.

[5] Origen Cels. iv. 52.

[6] Preaching of Peter, quoted in Origen Comm. on John 6:15.

Credner[1] and Hatch,[2] and got strong support from Harris' studies,[3] who maintains that such a work may have been the first literary work in the hands of the Christian missionary to the Jews. Justin sought to show that whoever disbelieves in Jesus disbelieves the prophets.[4] The purpose of the prophecies was to provide the means whereby it could be known for a surety that Jesus is the Christ.[5] If the Jews had really understood the prophets, they would never have denied Jesus' messiahship.[6] Justin makes no effort whatever to prove Jesus by resort to reason, but solely by use of the prophecies.[7]

Irenaeus, too, insisted that Jesus' messiahship was fully foretold by Moses and the prophets.[8] And Tertullian maintains that the proof that Jesus is the Christ is not to be drawn from his miracles alone, but from the prophecies as well.[9] He tries to prove mathematically that Jesus came to earth in accordance with the prediction in Daniel 9:24-27.[10]

When the pre-existence of Jesus as the emissary of God to Old Testament characters became firmly fixed in many sections of the church in the second century, Christian apologists argued that when Moses or the prophets wrote concerning the Messiah, it was really the pre-existent Jesus who was speaking about himself. "The writings of Moses are the words of Christ."[11] "He instructed by Moses and then by the prophets."[12] David's prophecies were

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[1] W. Credner, Beiträge zur Einleitung in die biblischen Schriften (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1838), II, 318 f.

[2] Edwin Hatch, Essays in Biblical Greek (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), pp. 203-14.

[3] Rendell Harris, Testimonies (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1916, 1920).

[4] Justin Dial. 136. [5] Ibid., 88.

[6] Ibid., 126. [7] Ibid., 68.

[8] Irenaeus Heres. IV. x f.

[9] Tertullian Against Marcion iii. 3.

[10] Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 8.

[11] Irenaeus Heres. IV. ii. 3.

[12] Clement Alex. Instructor i. 11.

Christ speaking through him.[1] It was Christ who spoke to Moses, "for none ever saw God the Father and lived."[2]

The use of scripture to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah was the primary method adopted by the Christians for converting the Jews. To both parties the scripture was a book in which every word was inspired by the one true God. The scriptures could not be expected to have as much authority in the minds of the pagan gentiles. Thus it appears that the Hebrew scriptures were not always used in support of the Christian mission to the gentiles. Irenaeus plainly says that the scriptures were employed to win the Jews, and he thereby implies that he thought this method was not in vogue when the church evangelized among the pagans.[3] Arnobius, who wrote to the heathen, proceeded as though the Old Testament was entirely unknown to him. Lactantius, a semi-Jewish Christian, saw no advantage in using the Hebrew Bible when Christians worked among the heathen. "Persons devoid of the truth do not think that these [prophetical utterances] can be trusted; for they say that they were not divine but human utterances."[4] "Let us omit the testimonies of the prophets, lest the proof should seem less appropriate from these [Old Testament writers] to whom no credence whatever is attached."[5] Lactantius finds fault with Cyprian for having argued with the heathen Demetrianus from the Old Testament, "for he was not be refuted by the testimonies of scripture, which he regarded as idle, [or] forged, [or] spurious, but by arguments and reasoning."[6] Nevertheless he himself sometimes found it necessary to use such proofs, and he tried to prove the value of the prophets by saying that they were "more ancient than even the Greek writers."[7] But the attitude of these men was typical of the whole church. The early apologies often make fairly extensive use of scripture to convince the heathen that Jesus was divine, for many gentiles reverenced

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[1] Clement Alex. Miscellanies vi. 6.

[2] Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 9.

[3] Irenaeus Heres. IV. xxiv. 1.

[4] Lactantius Institutes 1.4. [5] Ibid., 1. 5.

[6] Ibid., v. 4.

[7] Ibid., iv. 5.

ancient books of whatever character for the simple reason that they were ancient. If Jesus' divinity could be proved from an ancient book, this constituted a demonstration of no mean importance. But the church's meticulous combing and recombing of the scriptures to find new proof passages was inspired not so much by pagan indifference as by Jewish hostility to the idea that Jesus could be proved from the scriptures to be the Messiah.

With the Jews

> it was a standing principle of rabbinic exegesis of the Old Testament that what the prophets predicted had reference to the "days of the Messiah," that is to say, to the expected time when God, after long centuries of waiting, should visit his people with judgment and blessing, bringing to a climax his dealings with them in history.[1]

In Jewish thought "the world was created only for the Messiah,"[2] and "all the prophets together prophesied only of the days of the Messiah."[3] Therefore appeal to prophecy was the method above all others, indeed the only one, which could give promise of convincing the Jews of the truth of the Christian claims for Jesus. Without basing their appeal on the Jewish scriptures, they would have gotten nowhere. "Nor would we have tolerated your conversation," Trypho says to Justin, "had you not referred everything to the scriptures, for you are very zealous in adducing proofs from them."[4] This same method was employed by Tertullian when he countered Jewish attack in his An Answer to the Jews. The Jewish viewpoint was, "If I do not find it in the ancient scriptures, I will not believe the gospel."[5] Irenaeus naively imagined that "the instruction of the former [the Jews] was an easy task, because they could allege proofs from the scriptures."[6]

Jewish objections to the application of scripture to Jesus.--The lavish use of scripture by the Christians did not go unchallenged. The Jewish leaders were forced to give battle, or admit that the church had proved its case. There was question as to the legitimacy of using the scriptures to prove Jesus to be the Messiah, or of their authoritativeness if they

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[1] C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1937), p. 25.

[2] Sanh. 98b. [3] Sanh. 99a. [4] Justin Dial. 56.

[5] Ignatius Philadelphians 8.

[6] Irenaeus Heres. IV. xxiv. 1.

yielded such proof. The Jewish reply rested on several contentions.

(1) They frowned on the midrashic and rabbinic methods of exegesis which enabled the Christians to find Jesus everywhere they looked. They accused Paul, for instance, of "adulterating (δολοῦντες) the word of God."[1] But this objection was embarrassed by their own practises in the use of scripture. Back and forth flew the charge that the other side was blind and ignorant of the scripture's true meaning. Jesus had overcome the disciples' blindness after his resurrection when he "opened their mind, that they might understand the scriptures."[2] The Holy Spirit was given to "guide you into all the truth."[3] But the Jews were devoid of such understanding. "You understand nothing of the scriptures.....They are strange to you, although you read them daily."[4] "Your expositors are without understanding."[5] "Christ remains concealed from you, and when you read the scriptures, you do not understand them."[6] Irenaeus makes the same point: "They do not possess the explanation of all things pertaining to the advent of the Son of God."[7] As we have seen, the Rabbis countered by censuring those who "insolently interpet the Torah."[8]

(2) The second expedient of the Jews was the denial that many passages which the church called up were messianic. "The prophecies referred to the events of his life may also suit other events as well."[9] Celsus' Jew maintains that only "one prophet had predicted the advent of Christ," but we are left to guess which one this was.[10]

Psalm 110:1 was in Dodd's opinion one of the fundamental texts of the primitive kerygma.[11] It was used many times in the New Testament.[12] The Jews of the early first century regarded the verse as a messianic prophecy, in Strack and Billerbeck's

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[1] II Cor. 4:2. [2] Lk. 24:45-47. [3] Jn. 16:13. Cf. 14:26.

[4] Justin Dial. 55. [5] Ibid., 36. [6] Ibid., 113.

[7] Irenaeus Heres. IV. xxvi. 1. [8] T. Sanh. XII, 9.

[9] Origen Cels. i. 50. [10] Origen Cels. ii. 79.

[11] C. H. Dodd, op. cit., pp. 14 f.

[12] I Cor. 15:1-3, 25; Col. 3:1; Eph. 1:20; Mk. 12:36; Mt. 22:44; Lk. 20:42 f; Acts 2:34 f; Heb. 1:13, etc.

opinion,[1] and so it was entirely natural that the Believers took it up. But beginning with R. Ishmael (100-135), if not sooner, it was not regarded as messianic by the Jews, and this continued until the second half of the third century, when the church and Judaism were completely separate in every respect. Justin and Tertullian both tell us that the Jews of their time claimed that the verse referred to Hezekiah.[2] Psalm 72, with which Jesus' healing ministry and interest in the poor were justified, was said to refer to Solomon.[3] Another Christian favorite, Psalm 70, was also claimed to be Solomonic in reference.[4] "The King of Glory" of Psalm 24 was said by some Jews to be Hezekiah, and by others Solomon.[5] Justin says that the Jews even denied that the important Psalm 22 was messianic.[6] In a disputation with Jews in which Origen says he took part, the Jews disallowed the use of Isaiah 53:1-8, claiming that "the predictions bore reference to the whole people, regarded as one individual."[7]

(3) After the Jews finished with the elimination of many of the passages which the Christians relied upon, they refused to admit the Septuagint translations of many which remained, claiming that in the Greek form they were untrue to the original Hebrew. Justin was particularly embarrassed over this, for he knew no Hebrew, and was forced to rely on the Septuagint as the only Bible he knew.[8] The Jews were particularly vociferous in their contention that ἡ παρθένος did not properly translate the Hebrew הָעַלְמָה , and that therefore no scriptural support could be adduced for the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.[9] Refusals of this kind to accept

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[1] H. L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash (Munich: C. Beck, 1922-28), IV, 1, 452-65.

[2] Justin Dial. 33, 83; Tertullian Against Marcion v. 9.

[3] Justin Dial. 34; Tertullian Against Marcion v. 9.

[4] Tertullian, ibid. [5] Justin Dial. 85.

[6] Ibid. 96. Later, however, the Jews once again took this to be one of the messianic Psalms: Yalkut on Isa. 60:1. § 499.

[7] Origen Cels. i. 55. [8] Justin Dial. 71, 120.

[9] Ibid., 71; Irenaeus III. xxi. 1-4; Origen Cels. i. 35; Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 9; Against Marcion iii. 13.

the Septuagint finally led to its total rejection by the Jews, despite their one-time lavish praise of its perfection and accuracy.[1] The earlier Jewish stories of its marvelous composition were taken up by Christian authors and used to good advantage to validate their employment of the Septuagint as a source for proof texts.[2] In the second century Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, all Greek-speaking Jews or proselytes, made new translations of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek. Onkelos is also said to have made a translation, but Silverstone argues that Aquila and Onkelos were the same person.[3] The work of Aquila and Onkelos was that of Phariseeism. Symmachus, according to Eusebius and Jerome, was an Ebionite.[4] Epiphanius says he was a Samaritan who embraced Judaism.[5] These translations won quick recognition all over the Greek-speaking Jewish world, and soon the Septagint was totally deserted to the Christians. This step went a short way toward ridding the Jews of the embarrassing fact that the church had appropriated their scriptures as the church's own, only to use them against Judaism. The versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion were included by Origen in his great Hexapla.

(4) The Jews may have adopted another method: adulteration of the text in order to eliminate or alter passages which gave too much aid and comfort to the Christian contentions for Jesus. At least, Justin and Origen complain that the Jews were guilty of this sort of thing.[6] But it appears that Christians, too, were guilty of tampering with scripture by adding things which were not there.[7]

(5) Finally, those passages which the Jews admitted were

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[1]Letter of Aristeas 310-13; Philo Life of Moses ii. 5-7; Josephus Antiq. XII. ii. 13 f.

[2]Justin Hortatory Address to the Greeks 13; Irenaeus Heres. iii. 21:1-3; Clement Alex. Miscellanies i. 22.

[3]A. E. Silverstone, Aquila and Onkelos (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931).

[4]Eusebius Eccl. Hist. vi. 17; Jerome "Preface to Job," Vulgate..

[5]Epiphanius On Measures and Weights 16.

[6]Justin Dial. 72; Origen Hom. in Jer. 16:10; Comm. on Mt. 23: 37 ff.

[7]Ep. of Barnabas 7, 12; Justin Dial. 42, 72, 73, 91,96.

messianic were said to refer not to Jesus, but to a far more glorious one than he who yet was to be revealed. Many passages that Justin adduces the Jews admit "do refer indeed to Christ, but they venture to assert that this man is not Christ."[1] Celsus' Jew asks, "Why should it be to you alone, rather than innumerable others, who existed after the prophecies were published, to whom these predictions are applicable?"[2] "The prophecies agree with ten thousand other things more credibly than with Jesus."[3]

The Jews may have raised yet one more objection to the Christian use of scripture to establish Jesus' messiahship: Christians quote only those passages which suit their purpose, but avoid those which damage their case. I know of no passage which directly makes this accusation, but there is one in Justin's Dialogue which refers to the Christian habit of avoiding those verses which militate against the church's renunciation of sabbath observance while quoting those which can be made to serve the Christian attitude toward the sabbath.[4]

Use of scripture in the gospels and Acts.--We come now to the question, were these objections to the Christian use of scripture current in the first century? There is no reason why they should not have been. The issue was the same in the first century as in the second. We have already noted that Paul appears to have been reproached by Jews for misusing scripture.[5] The Jewish objections in the first century would be no more effective in deterring the Christian use of scripture than they were in the second century. In fact, the more the Jews voiced their protests against certain interpretations and employments of passages, the more the Christians were impelled to look for further passages which might add weight to their contentions for Jesus. Therefore we note how, with the passage of time, pericopes which once had but one supporting scriptural passage received a second,[6] and a great many which had none later received a demonstrating text. Acts makes even the books of Moses yield

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[1]Justin Dial. 68. Cf. 51. [2]Origen Cels. i. 50.

[3]Ibid., ii. 28. [4]Justin Dial. 27. [5]II Cor. 4:2.

[6]E.g., Plucking of grain on sabbath: to I Sam. 21:6 Matthew adds Num. 28:9 f and Hosea 6:6; The Call of Levi: Matthew adds Hosea 6:6 to the proverb quoted by all three synoptists.

prophecies of Jesus' messiahship.[1] Scripture was lavishly employed to explain those matters about Jesus which were under heaviest attack, such as his death, the betrayal of Judas, and the fact that the Jews had not believed in Jesus in his lifetime. Acts distinctly intimates that there was no abatement of the practise of commending Jesus to the Jews by use of scripture. "All the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days."[2] The mark of a good preacher was to be "mighty in the scriptures."[3] Apollos at Achaia "showed publicly by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."[4] The scriptures when rightly understood speak of Jesus, as the Ethiopian eunuch was shown.[5] Paul used both the law and the prophets in an effort to persuade the Jews of Rome that Jesus was the Christ.[6] He claimed that in his preaching of Jesus he said "nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come."[7] The people of Thessalonica "received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."[8] These passages clearly show that from the beginning, according to Luke, Christian preaching to the Jews built its case solely on the ancient predictions rather than the native winsomeness of Jesus' life and message. If the Jews objected to some feature of Jesus' ministry, the scriptures were searched for texts which would justify it. If they objected to the employment of certain ancient passages, far from discouraging the Christian's belief in and use of this method, their objections only served to impel the church to reread the scriptures to find new ammunition with which to justify their faith in Jesus' messiahship and force the Jews, even against their will, to admit that he was the promised One. We may gain an appreciation of how widespread the use of the ancient scriptures was in the formation of the gospel materials by glancing at the appendix in Burton and Goodspeed's Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels.

The Fourth Gospel makes about a dozen usages of the Old

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[1]Acts 3:22 f, quoting Deut. 18:15, 19. [2]Acts 3:24.

[3]Acts 18:24. [4]Acts 18:28.

[5]Acts 8:26-35. [6]Acts 28:23.

[7]Acts 26:22. [8]Acts 17:11 f.

Testament to help establish Jesus' messiahship and the predicted course of his life. Most of these are new passages which the synoptists did not employ.[1] Philip informs Nathanael that the one of whom Moses and the prophets had written has been discovered.[2] Jesus himself says that the scriptures bear witness of him.[3] John, like the synoptics, was therefore ready to employ the ancient predictions to validate Jesus, although he used them far more sparingly than they. This he did in the face of a Jewish opposition which was entirely familiar to him: "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me."[4] Perhaps because of a violent Jewish counterattack against the usual Christian methods of employing scripture, by the time John wrote, he composed his gospel without relying as heavily upon it as earlier preaching and gospel writers had done. Rather, he produced a "spiritual gospel," conditioning his presentation on what the church by his time had learned in its contests with the Jews and pagans. Most of the points on which the synoptic portraits could be criticized he removed or rendered innocuous. The life of obscurity, poverty, struggle, and humiliation he dressed in a new and glorious regal robe. To him the Jesus of history was truly and completely the Messiah and Son of God, and he did not need a second coming to complete what had only been begun in his earthly life. John apparently saw that many prophecies which had been utilized did not help the cause, but hurt it. In brief, John's "proof" did not rest upon fulfilled prophecy primarily, but upon the grandeur of the figure he portrayed.

John, however, represents a special type of early Christian theology which did not become dominant in the church until after the Catholic period had gotten well under way a century later. In the meantime the Old Testament remained the chief evidence offered by the Christian missionary,[5] and the church's doctrine was built on the dual foundation of the apostles and the prophets.[6] To some the prophetic word regarding Jesus' life and resurrection was even more sure than the testimony afforded by the eye-

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[1]They are Jn. 2:17; 6:45; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:28,36,37.

[2]Jn. 1:45. [3]Jn. 5:39. [4]Jn. 5:45 f.

[5]I Peter 1:10-12. [6]Eph. 2:20.

witnesses themselves.[1]

Jesus Was Not a False Messiah

False Jewish Messiahs of first and second centuries.-- Enslin in his most recent book makes the remarkable statement that the first leader in the history of Judaism definitely to have called himself the Messiah was Bar Kochba.[2] But it seems quite apparent that a long series of pretender messianic kings appeared from the time of Herod I to the end of the first revolt in 70, and that a few appeared in the second century before Bar Kochba.

We note first that Bagoas, a eunuch, evidently was persuaded that he would have a son who would establish the kingdom of the Messiah in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah 56:3-5. But Herod slew all who were involved in this, near the end of his reign.[3] Shortly after Herod's death in 4 B.C. Judas the Galilean, son of Hezekiah, attempted to make himself a messianic king.[4] Simon, another impostor king, operated after Herod's death,[5] as did Athrongeus, a shepherd.[6] Josephus says there were many like figures at this period whom he does not name.[7]

At about the time of John the Baptist and Jesus messianic hopes were running very high among the people, and the good tidings of deliverance from the domination of Rome was eagerly anticipated, according to Luke.[8] Messianic deliverance was regarded as at hand, and certainly before the nonce generation would die out.[9] Jewish calendars in use at the time reckoned the Messiah's coming as some time around what is to us the middle of the

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[1] II Peter 1:19.

[2] M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings (New York: Harpers, 1938), p. 68.

[3] Josephus Antiq. XVII. ii. 4.

[4] Acts 5:37; Josephus Antiq. XVII. x. 5; Origen Cels. 1.57.

[5] Josephus Antiq. XVII. x. 6. [6] Ibid., XVII. x. 7.

[7] Ibid., XVII. x. 8.

[8] Lk. 1:32 f, 68-71, 74; 3:15.

[9] I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 1:7 f; II Thess. 2:2; Mt. 10:23; 16:28; James 5:8, etc.

first century A.D.[1] In the year 35 Pilate dispersed a number of Samaritans who had assembled near Mt. Gerazim at the bidding of an imposter, in order to see the temple vessels buried there by Moses.[2] Around 44 one Theudas, called by Josephus a magician, and by Luke one who "gave himself out to be somebody," appeared, but his movement was crushed by the procurator Cuspius Fadus.[3]

Such persons also appeared in Samaria. We read of Simon Magus, called in Acts a sorcerer whom his followers regarded as "that Power of God which is called Great."[4] Justin says he was considered a god, and that the Samaritans worshipped him.[5] Irenaeus says, "He taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father, while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit."[6] He, along with Cerinthus, is called a deceiver in the Epistle of the Apostles (ca. 160).[7] McGiffert thinks he claimed to be the Messiah, and instituted a messianic movement in Samaria which was intended to supplant Christianity, or to take the place among the Samaritans of Jesus' messianic movement among the Jews.[8] His effort to rival and surpass Jesus very likely began after his contact with the Christians which Acts mentions.[9] Irenaeus says that he appeared in the reign of Claudius.[10] Origen tells us that the Samaritans also experienced one Dositheus, who claimed that he was "the Christ predicted by Moses, and he appears to

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[1] A. H. Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel (New York: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 6-9.

[2] Josephus Antiq. XVIII. iv. 1.

[3] Acts 5:36; Josephus Antiq. XX. v. 1; Origen Cels. i, 57; VI. 11; Eusebius Eccl. Hist. ii. 2.

[4] Acts 8:9-24.

[5] Justin Apol. i. 25, 56; ii. 15; Dial. 120.

[6] Irenaeus Heres. I. xxiii.

[7] Epistle of the Apostles 1.

[8] A. C. McGiffert, A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age (The International Theological Library"; New York: Scribners, 1897), p. 99.

[9] Acts 8:17-24.

[10] Irenaeus Heres. I. xxiii. 1. Cf. Origen Cels. v. 62; vi. 11; Recog. of Clement ii. 6; Apostolical Constitutions vi. 7.

have gained over some to his views."[1] In another place Origen says that this man gave himself out to be the Son of God.[2]

In the procuratorship of Felix (52-60) imposters continued to appear, who "deceived and deluded the people."[3] The chief of these seems to have been the Egyptian Jew, who may be the one Origen had in mind when speaking of the Egyptian Antinous.[4] Some modern scholars believe this Egyptian may have been the Ben Stada of the Talmud. At all events, he was the one mentioned in Acts 21:38. Josephus calls him a false prophet, who deluded a large number of Jews into believing that he could make the walls of Jerusalem fall down. When Felix sent troops out against him, he escaped and allowed his followers to be cut down.[5]

The next procurator, Festus (60-62), was also bedeviled by impostors. Josephus mentions one who led the people out into the wilderness, promising them deliverance and freedom, but they were all massacred by Festus' troops.[6] The same conditions prevailed during the procuratorships of Albinus (62-64) and Florus (64-66). Royal messianic pretenders arose repeatedly, among them Costobarus and Saulus.[7]

When the great revolt broke out in 66, Menahem, a son of Judas the Galilean, gathered a band of men, armed them, and marched to Jerusalem as a king.[8] That he pretended to be the Messiah is indicated in the Talmud, which states that the Messiah's name is Menahem, the son of Hezekiah (his grandfather).[9] Many other false prophets appeared in the course of the city's siege and destruction.[10]

After the catastrophe of the year 70 the appearance of Messiahs subsided for a time.[11] The next one seems to have been Adreas or Lukuas, who started a world-wide revolution of Jews in

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[1]Origen Cels. i. 57. [2]Ibid., vi. 11.

[3]Josephus Antiq. XX. viii. 5; Wars II. xiii. 4,6.

[4]Origen Cels. v. 63.

[5]Josephus Antiq. XX. viii. 6; Wars. II. xiii. 5.

[6]Josephus Antiq. XX. viii. 10. [7]Ibid., XX. ix. 4.

[8]Josephus Wars. II. xvii. 8 f. [9]Sanh. 98 b.

[10]Josephus Wars VI. v. 2.

[11]H. G. Friedmann, "Pseudo-Messiahs," Jew. Encyc. X.

the year 115, but was vanquished by Lusus Quietus and Marcius-Turbo (117).[1]

The noted R. Akiba hailed Bar Kochba as the Messiah-King, and referred to him the predictions of Num. 24:17 and Haggai 2:21 f, hence his name, "Son of the Star."[2] The revolt was precipitated by Hadrian's intention of converting Jerusalem into a heathen city. Whether Davidic descent was claimed for Bar Kochba is not known.[3] But not all Jews accepted him as the Messiah.[4] Some dubbed him Bar Coziba, "the son of lies."[5] But most of the nation seemed to have accepted him, for the Jews made a tremendous effort against Rome under his leadership. But it ended in disastrous defeat and misery for the survivors of the war, and Bar Kochba lost his own life on the walls of Bethat. The only other Messiahs to crop up around this time, as far as we know, were Rufus, the "Red One" with fiery red hair who was the son of Bar Kochba, and Romulus, Bar Kochba's grandson, for a short time in the year 135.[6] Thereafter Judaism hardened itself to strict Torah observance, and no false Messiahs or messianic movements cropped out again until Moses of Crete, ca. 440 A.D.

Jesus not one of the false Messiahs.--In the midst of all these messianic movements the Christian faith got under way with its own strong messianic orientation, the chief tenet of which was that Jesus was and is the Messiah of Jewish hope. Justin adds his testimony that many false Messiahs had appeared.[7] It was to be expected that the Jews who disbelieved in Jesus as the Messiah would raise the cry that he was an impostor as so many of the time had been. Many of these impostors had met a violent death, and to most Jews Jesus' condemnation and death was fully

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[1]Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. iv. 2; Dio Cassius Roman History LXVIII.32. Cf. S. Krauss, "Bar Kokba and Bar Kokba War," Jew. Enc. II.

[2]G. F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1927-30), I, 89.

[3]Ibid., II, 329. [4]Lam. r. to Lam. 2:2; Jer Taanith 68d.

[5]Cant. r. II. 18. Cf. Jer. Taan. IV, 5; Lam. r. II. 5.

[6]S. Krauss, op. cit.

[7]Justin Dial. 51.

justified, for scripture declared that a prophet that shall speak "presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak," should be put to death.[1]

Second century literature clearly shows that Jesus was regarded by most unbelieving Jews as an impostor. Justin complains that the Jews dared to call him "a deceiver of the people,[2] one who led many Jews astray.[3] Celsus' Jew asserted that Jesus was an arrogant person,[4] one who made bold statements of what he would do, but did not perform them.[5] Celsus himself remarks that all these would-be Messiahs made the same bold claims for themselves as Jesus had done, and one could only decide between them by casting the dice.[6] The Jew concludes by saying that "countless individuals will convict Jesus of falsehood, alleging that those predictions which were spoken of him were intended of them."[7] Therefore those Jews who believe in Jesus "have been most ridiculously deceived."[8]

The Mishna seems to have drawn some kind of distinction between a false prophet and a deceiver. "'The falst prophet' (Deut. 18:20) -- he that prophesies what he has not heard and what has not been told him, his death is at the hands of men."[9] Such a one must be put to death by strangulation.[10] But the person who leads astray and is a deceiver is to be stoned.[11] Unquestionably the false Messiahs were classed as deceivers rather than false prophets, if such a distinction had been made already in the first century.

That Jesus was looked upon by the Jews more as a false Messiah than a false prophet is seen in the old Jewish tradition that he was stoned to death. A Baraitha of the Tannaitic period reads as follows: "Jeshu the Nazarene goeth forth to be stoned, because he hath practiced magic and deceived and led astray Israel. ....He was a deceiver,and the Merciful hath said (Deut. 13:8), Thou shalt not spare, neither shalt thou conceal him."[12] That

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[1]Deut. 18:20-22. [2]Justin Dial. 69. [3]Ibid., 118.

[4]Origen Cels. ii. 7.

[5]Ibid., ii. 10. Cf. Recog. of Clement i. 61.

[6]Ibid., vi. 11. [7]Ibid., i. 57. Cf. i. 51.

[8]Ibid., ii. 1. Cf. ii. 40. [9]Sanh. XI, 5. [10]Sanh. XI,1.

[11]Sanh. VII, 4. [12]Sanh. 43a, old editions.

Jesus was a deceiver is averred also in a Tosephta of the Tannaitic period.[1] Jesus ceased being a Rabbi, for from the time one deceives he is no longer a Rabbi.[2] R. Abahu (who lived at Caesarea at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries, and engaged in many disputes with heretics, some of them certainly with Christians), seems to have spoken against Jesus when he said, "If a man say to thee, I am God, he is a liar; if [he says, I am] the son of man, in the end the people will laugh at him; if [he says] I will go up to heaven, he saith, but shall not perform it."[3] R. Eleazar ha-Kappar (died ca. 260) is quoted as saying, "There was a man, son of a woman, who should rise up and seek to make himself God, and cause the whole world to go astray.....Alas, who shall live of that nation which heareth that man who hath made himself God."[4] For mocking at the words of the wise Jesus is in hell, and his special punishment is boiling in filth.[5] If the references to Balaam are covert designations of Jesus, the Mishna passage of the Tannaitic period about the three kings and four private men who have no part in the world to come includes Jesus.[6] There are also passages which say that Jesus led all Israel into apostasy.[7]

These numerous items from Christian and Jewish literature fully establish that the Jews countered Christian affirmations of Jesus' messiahship with the retort that instead of being such, he was rather nothing more than a deceiver of Israel. We now turn to the gospels, to see if they bear traces of this charge against Jesus when they were written.

Matthew preserves in an independent pericope direct evidence that the Jews of the first century called Jesus a deceiver.[8] Acts hints that his movement was likened to those of Judas of

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[1] T. Sanh. X, 11. Cf. Sanh. 67a.

[2] Jer. Sanh. VII, 16 (25c, d).

[3] Jer Taanith 65b. [4] Yalkut Shim 766.

[5] Gitt. 57a.

[6] Sanh. X, 2.

[7] Sanh. 107b; Sotah 47a; Jer. Hag. 77d.

[8] Mt. 27:63.

Galilee and Theudas.[1] The accounts of his trial before Caiaphas show that he was regarded as an impostor, and therefore guilty of blasphemy in calling himself the Messiah.[2] The rejection of Jesus as the Messiah is frequently referred to in all three synoptics.[3] In the western text of Mk. 3:21 Jesus is accused of being a disturber of the people.[4] Accordingly, we may conclude that the gospel writers were fully aware of the Jewish claim that Jesus was a deceiver, a false Messiah, and that their gospels were affected thereby.

Matthew, sometimes followed by Luke, expands his Markan source in order to bring out that Jesus was no false Messiah. Both expand the meager Markan statement about Jesus' temptation in the wilderness by recounting specific temptations which Jesus overcame--temptations to false messianic ideals.[5] Moreover, Christianity is not a movement calculated to destroy Judaism but to fulfill it. The church's Messiah did not come to lead astray the people from the accepted patterns of Jewish conduct based upon the law, but to give the law a fuller and deeper meaning. The church's ethic is not inimical to that of the scribes and Pharisees, but surpasses even theirs.[6] Examples are then offered to illustrate this greater righteousness. This, however, is an explanation peculiar to Matthew. No parallels are found in Mark, and in Luke there is but one verse.[7]

All three synoptists quote Jesus' warnings against following false prophets and false Messiahs, and thereby they appear to be protecting Jesus from the charge that he was one of that number. They will show signs and wonders, and lead many astray.[8] Matthew carries a special warning against false prophets.

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[1] Acts 5:34-39.

[2] Mk. 14:61-64; Mt. 26:63-66; Lk. 22:67-71.

[3] Mk. 8:31; 12:10; Mt. 21:42; Lk. 9:22; 17:25; 20:17, etc.

[4] Codex Bezae reads, ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἔξεσται αὐτούς.

[5] Mt. 4:1-10; Lk. 4:1-12.

[6] Mt. 5:17-20.

[7] Lk. 16:17.

[8] Mk. 13:5 f; Mt. 24:4 f, 11; Lk. 21:8; Mk. 13:21-23; Mt. 24:23-25; Lk. 17:23 f, 37.

They are to be detected by their fruits.[1] Matthew and Luke also add another warning. The true Messiah's coming will be as lightning, and not as the false ones have come.[2]

The Fourth Gospel, always conscious of Jewish misrepresentations of Jesus as well as gentile, shows that in the day of its composition Jewish assertions that Jesus was a false Christ were very persistent. "He leadeth the multitude astray."[3] He was a false Messiah because he did not keep the Sabbath.[4] He made himself out to be a great one, greater even than Abraham.[5] He even identified himself with God.[6] The witness he bore was of his own making, and hence was not true.[7] John's defense of Jesus against such charges takes several forms. Jesus is not a false prophet, as it is admitted he would be if he had spoken only on his own authority and had no witness but himself.[8] But full testimony was given of him by John the Baptist, Moses, and the scripture.[9] What is more, the Father has borne witness of him,[10] and has sealed him.[11] He spoke and performed only that for which he had been sent by the Father.[12]

Jesus Was Not a Sorcerer or Magician

Christians regarded Jesus' miracles as evidences of his messiahship.--Among the glories of the messianic age which the prophets of Israel envisioned were healings of the sick and relief for the oppressed and unfortunate. Psalm 72 was understood by some first century Jews to be a prophecy of the work of the Messiah. "He will deliver the needy when he crieth, and the poor that hath no helper. He will have pity on the poor and needy, and the souls of the needy he will save."[13] Isaiah had said, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and

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[1] Mt. 7:15-20. [2] Mt. 24:23-27; Lk. 21:23 f.

[3] Jn. 7:12. [4] Jn. 9:16. [5] Jn. 8:53-58.

[6] Jn. 5:18; 10:30, 33. [7] Jn. 8:13. [8] Jn. 5:31.

[9] Jn. 5:31-47. [10] Jn. 5:37; 8:18.

[11] Jn. 6:27.

[12] Jn. 3:32; 5:19, 30: 8:38; 12:49; 14:10.

[13] Ps. 72:12 f.

the tongue of the dumb shall sing."[1] "Stammerers shall speak plainly."[2] The Spirit of the Lord God will be upon the Messiah, whom he has anointed "to preach good tidings unto the meek (or, poor)," and "to bind up the broken-hearted."[3] Jeremiah foresaw the day when sorrow will be at an end, for, "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the uttermost parts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child," and so on.[4] Recovery of sight for the blind is also part of the Messiah's work according to the Septuagint version of Isaiah 61:1.[5] The pseudepigraphic literature envisions the same mercies when the Messiah comes. "Then healing shall descend in dew, and disease shall withdraw."[6] "Healing and compassion shall be in his wings."[7]

Many Believers regarded Jesus' miracles of healing the blind, lame, deaf, and dumb as signs of the messianic age's arrival, and of Jesus' messiahship. This is clearly to be seen in the pericope narrating the doubts of John the Baptist as to Jesus' messiahship. Jesus is he, for "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear."[8] The Lukan pericope presenting Jesus quoting the Septuagint version of Isa. 61:1 f. as applying to himself and his work also makes this unmistakable. These things which were prophesied have now "been fulfilled in your ears."[9] A Matthean alteration of a Markan pericope tells us that Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases."[10]

In the golden age to come, Isaiah envisioned the punishment and imprisonment of the evil spirits and demons.[11] The Testament of Levi says, "Beliar shall be bound by him, and he shall give power to his children to tread upon the evil spirits."[12]

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[1]Isa. 35:5 f. Cf. 42:7. [2]Isa. 32:4.

[3]Isa. 61:1. Cf. 29:19. [4]Jer.31:8. [5]Cf. Lk.4:18-24.

[6]Apoc. of Baruch 73:2. [7]Test. of Zebulun 9:8.

[8]Mt. 11:5; Lk. 7:22. [9]Lk. 4:18-24.

[10]Mt. 8:16 f. quoting Isa. 53:4. [11]Isa. 24:21 f.

[12]Test. of Levi 18:12. Cf. Test. of Dan 5:10 f.

Jubilees states that the demons are under Mastema, or Satan.[1] They are to pursue their work of moral ruin until the judgment of Mastema,[2] or the setting up of the messianic kingdom, when "there will be no Satan, nor any evil destroyer."[3] The Book of Enoch says that demons will be punished when the age is consummated, at the beginning of the messianic kingdom.[4] And the Testament of Zebulun declares, "He shall redeem all the captivity of the sons of men from Beliar."[5]

The same conception of the Messiah's work is revealed in some of the synoptic materials. The demons are under Satan.[6] A Lukan pericope states that when "the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name," Jesus said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."[7] Jesus is the one who has bound Satan, that his demonic host might be plundered.[8] The demons are exorcised by the spirit (Lk., finger) of God. This activity is an indication that the kingdom of God has come to pass.[9] The demons infesting the unfortunate man of the Gerasenes did not know that the messianic age had dawned and that therefore their time had come, for they cried, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"[10] A further evidence of the messianic age was Jesus' bestowal on his disciples of the power to cast out demons,[11] heal all diseases,[12] and even trample upon serpents and scorpions without harm to them.[13]

The messianic age was also viewed by many as bringing about resurrections from the dead.[14] When the Messiah comes "no

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[1]Jubilees 10:9. [2]Jubilees 10:8. [3]Jubilees 23:29.

[4]Enoch 16:1. [5]Test. Zeb. 9:8.

[6]Mk. 3:26; Mt. 12:26; Lk. 11:18.

[7]Lk. 10:17 f. Cf. Rev. 20:2 f.

[8]Mk. 3:27; Mt. 12:29; Lk. 11:21 f. [9]Mt. 12:28; Lk.11:20.

[10]Mt. 8:29. Cf. Mk. 5:7; Lk. 8:28.

[11]Mk. 3:15, 6:7; Mt. 10:1; Lk. 9:1. [12]Mt.10:1; Lk. 9:1.

[13]Lk. 10:19; Acts 28:3-6; Mk. 16:18.

[14]Hosea 6:2; Isa. 26:19; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Daniel 12:2; Enoch 51:1; 61:5. For a list of passages divided according to the various Jewish views on the subject, see Charles. Apocr. and Pseud., II, 218, note on 51:1.

one shall die untimely."[1] There can be little doubt that the three raisings from the dead recorded in the four gospels were recounted to exhibit Jesus' messianic as well as divine character. To be sure, Mark, followed by Luke, reports Jesus as trying to keep secret the raising of Jairus' daughter so that his messiahship might not become known. But Matthew reports that the fame of this miracle spread over the land.[2] The Lukan pericope of the raising of the widow's son at Nain had the same result, exciting in the onlookers a consciousness that Jesus was the Messiah: "A great prophet is risen among us! and, God hath visited his people!"[3] The Johannine story of the raising of Lazarus relates that "many of the Jews who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him" as the Messiah.[4] The acclamation of Jesus as the Messiah when he entered Jerusalem was provoked, according to John, by this miracle of messianic proportions.[5]

Therefore it appears justifiable to say that most of the miracle stories of the gospels were originally told to exhibit to the Jewish nation that Jesus was at work in his lifetime in the prophesied role of the Messiah, and that these stories did not originate in the first instance to furnish the Christian missionaries to the pagan world with accounts of a wonder-working god so that the Lord Christ could successfully compete with other gods who were extolled for their prowess over the laws of nature. Whatever use may have been made of these miracle stories by Christian preachers out in the pagan world, it is altogether likely that their first publication was for the purpose of adding stature to the figure of Jesus as the Messiah, and for exhibiting him as having brought about the messianic age, or at least the beginnings of it, in his earthly lifetime. A very definite Jewish interest, therefore, was served by them. At any rate, Justin, Irenaeus, and Origen understood the miracles as fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's activity, and their testimony, coming from pagan surroundings, is of great importance.[6]

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[1]Apoc. of Baruch 73:2 f. [2]Mk. 5:43; Mt. 9:26; Lk. 8:56.

[3]Lk. 7:11-17. [4]Jn. 11:45. [5]Jn. 12:12-19.

[6]Justin Apol. i. 31, 48; Dial. 69; Irenaeus Heres. II. xiii. 4; Origen Cels. ii. 9, 48.

The Talmud, too, sometimes thought of the Messiah as a friend of the poor and the sick. R. Joshua b. Levi (3d cent.) relates how, at the direction of Elijah, he found the Messiah at the gate of Rome, sitting among the poor, the sick, and the maimed, ready to make his appearance when the divine summons came to him.[1]

Magic and wonder-workers among the Jews.--As we shall presently see, the Jews disavowed the messianic claims for Jesus not by denying the actuality of the miracles ascribed to him, but by attributing them to diabolically inspired sorcery. A passage in Matthew tells us that the choice was between Jesus as the son of David or as a wonder-worker in league with Beelzebub.[2] To show that Jesus was a sorcerer was a most effective means of deflating Jesus in the eyes of the Jewish masses, for, while sorcery and magic had a fascinating appeal for many of them, they did not look for it in their religious leadership, and certainly not in the Messiah they hoped for, for sorcery and magic were constantly combatted by the religious leaders of the nation, and were heavily legislated against in the law. Leviticus commanded that a man or woman with a "familiar spirit, or that is a wizard" must be stoned to death.[3] The prophets also had been very bitter against such practises.[4] This same attitude extended into the period immediately before and during Jesus' time.[5]

In the Talmud magic was looked upon as the result of superhuman agency employed by men who knew how to call it forth. In it is repeated the injunction to stone the sorcerer to death.[6] Josephus says that the incantations discovered by Solomon were still in use in his day, and he appears to have had great faith in their efficacy.[7] Certain gospel pericopes imply that in Jesus' time there were Jews openly practising exorcisms.[8] The Talmud,

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[1]Sanh. 98a; Targum Pseudo. Jonathan to Gen. 35:21.

[2]Mt. 12:23 f. [3]Lev. 20:27. Cf. Ex. 22:18: Deut. 18:10-14.

[4]E.g., Micah 5:12; Jer. 27:9.

[5]Enoch 65:6-11; Wisd. Sol. 17:7. Cf. Origen Cels. 1.36.

[6]Sanh. VII, 4, 11. Cf. Ludwig Blau, "Magic," Jew. Enc. VIII.

[7]Josephus Antiq. VIII. 11. 5. Cf. Wars II. xiii. 4.

[8]Mt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19.

without disapproval, tells about certain Rabbis who were miracle workers, but in no way implies that they achieved their results by diabolical means. R. Hanina b. Dosa was one such, a Galilean pupil of Johanan b. Zakkai. He was popular all his life for his saintliness and thaumaturgic powers. A story of one of his cures is very similar to that recorded in the gospels of the centurion's servant.[1] R. Jehoshua b. Hananiah, the teacher of Akiba, who in early life had been a singer in the Temple, was reputed to have possessed miraculous powers.[2] R. Jose the Galilean was another.[3] As late as the tenth century men invoked him in prayer: "R. Jose the Galilean, heal me!"[4] Simon Magus[5] and Menander[6] were Samaritan magicians. Another was Carpocrates.[7] One Simon, a Jew of Cyprus, "pretended to be a magician."[8] The name of Jesus was used by Jewish physicians to work their cures, at least up to the third century,[9] and the gospels imply this condition in the first century.[10] In Acts we read about other Jewish magicians: Bar-Jesus,[11] the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest who used the name of the Lord Jesus in performing exorcisms,[12] and the girl possessed with a spirit of divination.[13] It is of interest to note that according to Juvenal the Graeco-Roman world regarded the Jews as a race of magicians.[14]

By all Jews, of course, the biblical miracles were accepted without question. Modern Jewish writers often claim that the post-biblical miracle stories floating among the people were of the fairy tale, Sinbad the Sailor types, and were not intended to be taken literally. But we have just seen that such was not always the case. Therefore the Talmud gives warnings that no

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[1]Berakhoth V, 5; Jer. Ber. V, 9d; Ber. 34b.

[2]Jer. Sanh. 25d. [3]Jer. Ber. 9b.

[4]Silver, op. cit., 22 f.

[5]Acts 8:9-24; Vercelli Acts of Peter 4; Origen Cels. 1.57.

[6]Justin Apol. 1. 56; Irenaeus Heres. I. xxiii. 5.

[7]Ibid., II. xxxii. 5. [8]Josephus Antiq. XX. vii. 2.

[9]Jer. Ab. Zar. II, 2. [10]Mk. 9:38; Lk. 9:49; Mt. 7:22.

[11]Acts. 13:6. [12]Acts 19:13-17.

[13]Acts 16:16. [14]Juvenal Satires vi. 542-47.

attention is to be paid to a supernatural voice. Points affecting religion and life are not to be decided by appeals to miracles; the Torah is with the people, and is ever inspiring.[1] "He to whom God has worked a miracle is not conscious of it."[2] Yet the liturgy contained references to two post-biblical miracles.[3]

The main stream of Christianity, too, at least among its officialdom, was much opposed to magic. Any magician who prophesies by Jesus' name, casts out demons, or does many mighty deeds is a worker of iniquity who will be refused eternal life by Jesus himself.[4] Sorcerers will die the second death.[5] Ignatius insisted that by the coming of the Spirit "every kind of magic was destroyed."[6] To Barnabas magic was a characteristic of the Way of Darkness.[7] Justin states that false prophets "are filled with the lying unclean spirit" who "venture to work certain wonderful deeds for the purpose of astonishing men, and glorifying the spirits and demons of error."[8] The Apocalypse of Peter consigned sorcerers and sorceresses to the fires of hell.[9]

On the other hand, just as in Judaism, "popular" Christianity embraced all kinds of magical belief, as the extravagant New Testament apocryphal literature shows. Some Christian heretics thought Jesus was a magician.[10] Public opinion in Rome regarded all Christians as magicians.[11] The Acts of Peter and Andrew so

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[1]Berakhot, trans. A. Cohen (Cambridge: University Press, 1921), p. 332.

[2]Niddah 31a.

[3]H. M. Loewe, "The Ideas of Pharisaism," Judaism and Christianity, ed. W. O. E. Oesterley and H. M. Loewe (London: Sheldon Press, 1937), II, 23.

[4]Mt. 7:21-23. Cf. Acts 19:13-17. [5]Rev. 21:8; 22:15.

[6]Ignatius Ephesians 19. [7]Ep. of Barnabas 20.

[8]Justin Dial. 7.

[9]Apoc. of Peter, in James. Apocr. N.T., p. 517. Cf. Sibylline Oracles ii. 283 f.

[10]J. A. Fabricius, Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti (Hamburg, 1719, 1743), III, 396.

[11]W. M. Ramsay, The Church in the Roman Empire (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1912), pp. 236, 392.

regarded the apostles,[1] and Eusebius says that Peter and Paul were looked upon as abominable magicians by the Gentiles.[2]

Jewish literature, too, accuses Minim of practising magical arts.[3] In several places we read that the disciples healed the sick "in the name of Jesus Pandera."[4] Incidentally, pagans also used Jesus' name in the performance of cures.[5] But Jews were warned not to accept cures offered by the power of Jesus' name.[6]

These objections on the part of the Jews to cures offered in the name of Jesus receive full illustration in the synoptics and Acts. Some pericopes, adopted by Mark and Luke, say that Jesus did not disapprove of exorcisms accomplished by the use of his name.[7] But Acts tells us that when the lame man was healed in the name of Jesus,[8] the Jewish leaders registered severe displeasure.[9] Evidently by the same means the people who were brought from towns around Jerusalem "were healed every one," and this once again aroused the ire of the chief priests and Sadducees.[10] Paul cured the maid "having a spirit of divination" by invoking the name of Jesus.[11] The power of this name for purposes of exorcism could be utilized only by the proper persons, however, else the unclean spirit would do the wonder-worker injury.[12]

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[1]Acts of Peter and Andrew 4, 10, 12 f, 17 f, etc.

[2]Eusebius Against Hierocles ii.

[3]Koheleth r. I. 8, p. 4b. This is a Midrash of late date, but the story is of an incident dating about the middle of the second century.

[4]Jer. Shabb. 14d; Ab. Zar. 27b; Eccl. r. I. 8.

[5]Origen Cels. iii. 24.

[6]T. Hull. II, 22 f, a Tosephta of the Tannaitic period. Also Jer. Ab. Zar. 27b, 40d, 41a. These passages involve R. Ishmael, who died shortly after 135. Jer. Shabb. 14d tells a story involving R. Jehoshua b. Levi (ca. 260), and Ab. Zar. 28a one involving R. Abahu, who lived at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century.

[7]Mk. 9:38-40; Lk. 9:49 f; 10:17-19. [8]Acts 3:6.

[9]Acts 4:7, 17 f. [10]Acts 5:15-17. [11]Acts 16:16-18.

[12]Acts 19:13-20.

Jesus was one of the current wonder-workers.--We are now ready to apply the whole matter to Jesus, and to review the evidence that Jesus' miracles were said by the Jews to have been the acts of a sorcerer and magician, and not the work of the Messiah. Justin complains of the Jews that "though they saw such works [Jesus' miracles], they asserted it was magical art. For they dared to call him a magician, and a deceiver of the people."[1] Justin contends that the account of the visit of the magi to Jesus in his infancy does not imply that he, too, was a magician, but "shows that they revolted from that dominion which held them captive."[2] Accounts of the healings and raisings from the dead by Aesculapius were no hindrance to the acceptance of Jesus' miracles, for they were brought forward by the devil in imitation of the prophecies about Christ.[3] Justin sought to prove that Jesus was no magician by the further expedient of proving that he was the Christ by appeal to the Old Testament prophecies which matched Jesus' life.[4]

Origen had to meet similar defamations from the Jew of Celsus. This critic calls Jesus "a wicked and God-hated sorcerer."[5] "By means of sorcery he was able to accomplish the wonders which he performed," and yet he had the audacity to exclude from his kingdom all others who were sorcerers.[6] On the basis of such miraculous powers, which "he acquired in Egypt, he proclaimed himself a god."[7] This Jew compares Jesus' miracles to "the tricks of jugglers," who might be called Sons of God just as fitly as Jesus.[8] The Jew therefore asks, "Is it not a wretched inference from the same acts, to conclude that one is a God, and the others sorcerers."[9] Origen counters by asking this

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[1]Justin Dial. 69. [2]Ibid., 78. [3]Ibid., 69.

[4]Justin Apol. i. 30-53. [5]Origen Cels. i. 71.

[6]Ibid., i. 6; ii. 49, 51, 53.

[7]Cels. i. 28, 38; ii. 9. Scholars of the first to fourth centuries refer frequently and unanimously to Egypt as the original home of magic arts (L. Blau, Das altjüdische Zauberwesen [Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1898], pp. 37-49. Moses was often accused of being a magician by reason of his long residence in Egypt (Origen Cels. i. 45).

[8]Origen Cels. i. 68.

[9]Ibid., ii. 53.

Jew why he is willing to accept the miracles recorded of Moses, but not those of Jesus.[1] Jesus' eloquence consisted not merely of words, but of deeds.[2] Celsus himself added to the above accusations of his Jew by pointing in scorn to the fact that magical arts impress only the uneducated.[3] Other early Christian literature also shows how the Jews continually raised the cry that Jesus was nothing more than a sorcerer.[4]

We now turn to the Talmud, and find here too the Jewish reproach that Jesus was a sorcerer and magician. A Baraitha of the Tannaitic period reads in the old editions, "Jeshu the Nazarene goeth forth to be stoned, because he hath practiced magic and deceived and led astray Israel."[5] It was claimed that Jesus learned magic in Egypt. A Tosephta of the Tannaitic period reads: "'He that cuts marks on his flesh'; R. Eliezer condemns, the wise permit. He said to them, 'And did not Ben Stada learn only in this way?' They said to him, 'Because of one fool are we to destroy all discerning people?'"[6] The Babylonian Talmud reads, "Did not Ben Stada bring spells from Egypt in a cut which was upon his flesh?"[7] Many scholars believe that Jesus was covertly referred to as Balaam in the Talmud, because Balaam was a magician, and, according to the derivation of his name, "destroyer of the people."

The adverse Jewish judgment that Jesus was a sorcerer was based on the miracle stories aflost in oral and written form among the early Believers. We have no way of knowing how many miracle stories there were which did not reach the written stage of the four gospels known to us, nor do we know what the character of those stories was. They may have been far more extravagant stories than those which have come down to us. But there is a considerable number of items to be found in the synoptics and Acts which easily lent themselves to the adverse criticism

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[1] Ibid., ii. 52. [2] Ibid., ii. 73. [3] Ibid., vi. 41.

[4] Irenaeus Heres. II. xxxii. 5; Tertullian Apol. 21; On Shows 30; Recognitions of Clement i. 58; Jerome Ep. 55, ad Ascellam; Lactantius Institutes iv. 14; Acts of Pilate i. 1; version B, ii. 3; iii. 1; Letter of Pilate to Claudius (James, Apocr. p. 146); Koran 5, 61.

[5] Sanh. 43a. [6] T. Shabb. XI, 15.

[7] Shabb. 104b. Cf. Sanh. 106b; Sotah 47b. For discussion of Ben Stada as Jesus in the Talmud, see R.T. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903), pp. 35-39.

that Jesus was a sorcerer and a magician. All who "had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him."[1] They did this because "power came forth from him, and healed them all."[2] All who touched the border of his garments were healed.[3] The woman with a hemorrhage did this, and her prolonged malady was dried up.[4] It is also said that "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul," and they were of this nature. Even when his handkerchiefs and sprons were far removed from his body, they were instrumental in healing diseases and exorcising demons.[5]

By touching sick folk with his hands Jesus also cured.[6] Peter's mother-in-law was cured of her fever when he took her hand.[7] Jairus' daughter was returned from death by this means. Mark says that in addition Jesus spoke an Aramaic word, Talitha cumi. Luke also adds the spoken word, but gives it only in Greek.[8] Mark gives us two stories which detail how Jesus cured people by touching them. He took a deaf man aside, put his fingers in the man's ears, spat and touched his tongue, looked up to heaven and sighed, and said Ephphatha.[9] Jesus led a blind man out of his village, spat on his eyes, laid hands on him, and after the man could see partially, laid his hands on the man's eyes, and his sight was fully restored.[10]

Healings by the use of words with no mention of physical contact are also recorded. The Lukan version of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law does not mention taking her hand, but says only that Jesus "stood over her and rebuked the fever."[11] By a forceful command Jesus healed the paralytic.[12] By the same means the widow's son was raised from the dead.[13] By verbal means the ten lepers were cleansed,[14] and the demons were driven out of the

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[1]Mk. 3:10. [2]Lk. 6:19. [3]Mk. 5:56; Mt. 14:36.

[4]Mk. 5:27-32; Mt. 9:20 f; Lk. 8:44-46. [5]Acts 19:11 f.

[6]Lk. 4:40; Mk. 1:41 f; Mt. 8:3; Lk. 5:13.

[7]Mk. 1:31; Mt. 8:15. [8]Mk. 5:41; Mt. 9:25; Lk. 8:54.

[9]Mk. 7:33-36. [10]Mk. 8:22-26.

[11]Lk. 4:39. [12]Mk. 2:11 f; Mt. 9:6 f; Lk. 5:24 f.

[13]Lk. 7:14 f.

[14]Lk. 17:12-15.

Gerasene man and into the swine.[1] Jesus could even heal at a distance, as in the case of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter[2] and the centurion's servant.[3]

The so-called nature miracles, resembling very closely the type of miracles said to have been performed by the magicians of the time, and by the gods and heroes of the pagans, were, we might safely conclude, part of the reason for the claim that Jesus was a sorcerer and magician. This applies especially to the stories of the Calming of the Sea, Walking on the Water, Causing the Fig Tree to Wither, and the Johannine Making Water into Wine.

But, as we have already pointed out, to Christians miracle stories were valid proofs of Jesus' messiahship, and these nature miracles were evidences of his deity and of his control over the nature which God (or he) had made. John, indeed, says that the pre-existent Logos was the creator of the world,[4] and so a nature miracle such as that performed at the wedding in Cana was a sign of his deity, "manifesting his glory."[5] The Feeding of the Five Thousand aroused the people to say, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world."[6] In the synoptics, too, the nature miracles aroused faith in Jesus' messiahship, or something akin to it. Peter, James, and John followed Jesus as a result of the miraculous draught of fish.[7] The stilling of the tempest led them to see superhuman greatness in Jesus.[8] The walking on the sea constrained the disciples to confess, according to the Matthean version, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."[9]

In the synoptics two views of Jesus' miracles appear. On the one hand, it is said that Jesus wished to prevent his miracles from being known.[10] He steadfastly refused to give a sign of his messiahship, presumably a miracle, when asked repeatedly to do

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[1]Mk. 5:8-13; Mt. 8:32; Lk. 8:29-33.

[2]Mk. 7:24-30; Mt. 15:21-28.

[3]Mt. 8:5-13; Lk. 7:1-10. Cf. Jn. 4:46-53.

[4]Jn. 1:3, 10. [5]Jn. 2:11. [6]Jn. 6:14.

[7]Lk. 5:8-10. [8]Mk. 4:41; Mt. 8:27; Lk. 8:25.

[9]Mt. 14:33.

[10]Mk. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26; Mt. 12:16; 9:30; Lk. 5:14.

so.[1] This view was presented, chiefly by Mark, either to explain why Jesus was not a famous person in his day as a doer of signs of messianic proportions, or to account for his not being acclaimed by the nation as its Messiah during his lifetime. There is a certain unreality about this matter, for in some instances, at least, it was utterly futile for Jesus to ask those who witnessed his deeds to keep silence, since great crowds had accompanied Jesus to the scene and were certain to know the result, as in the case of the raising of Jairus' daughter; and similar crowds knew the results of other miracles, as in the case of the man who had been deaf and dumb.

On the other hand, the church saw in Jesus' miraculous deeds authentication of his mission as the Messiah, and that Satan was now bound and had "fallen from heaven."[2] Accordingly, stories of Jesus' miracles were circulated in which he did them openly.[3] In Acts, too, Jesus' miracles are viewed as signs. He was "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and signs."[4] The early missionaries of the church relied heavily on signs and wonders done in the name of Jesus to provoke faith in him, and, apparently, persuade men that the messianic age had begun.[5] Stephen "wrought great wonders and signs among the people."[6] Philip's preaching and signs converted many Samaritans.[7] Simon Magus was so impressed by this man's miracles, despite his own abilities as a sorcerer, that he believed and was baptized.[8] Peter's miracles led many people to "turn to the Lord."[9] When Dorcas was restored to life, "many believed on the Lord."[10] Sergius Paulus believed when he saw Bar-Jesus struck blind at the hand of Paul.[11] God confirmed the Christian preaching by grant-

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[1] Mk. 8:12; Mt. 12:38 f; 16:4; Lk. 11:16, 29. [2] Lk. 10:18.

[3] Mk. 2:5-12; Mt. 9:2-8; Lk. 5:20-26; Mk. 5:19; Lk. 8:39; Mk. 1:32-34; Mt. 8:16 f; Lk. 4:41; Mt. 9:29-31; Lk. 4:17-21; 18:43, etc.

[4] Acts 2:22. [5] Acts 4:30; 5:12. [6] Acts 6:8.

[7] Acts 8:6-8. [8] Acts 8:9-13. [9] Acts 9:33-35.

[10] Acts 9:36-43.

[11] Acts 13:6-12.

ing power to do signs and wonders.[1] The longer ending of Mark also says that the Lord "confirmed the word by the signs that followed."[2] And Hebrews tells us that signs and wonders were God's witnesses of the truth of the gospel.[3]

The Fourth Gospel brings out more specifically than the synoptics that Jesus did his miracles in order to arouse faith in him and show forth his glory. His "works" were done that men might believe that he was in the Father and the Father in him.[4] The miracle at Cana was a "sign" performed to manifest his glory.[5] Many believed on Jesus when they saw the signs that he did.[6] Nicodemus confesses that "no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."[7] The "sign" done on the nobleman's son caused the whole household to believe.[8] The Feeding of the Five Thousand was a "sign" which aroused faith in Jesus' messiahship.[9] The healing of the man born blind was an incontrovertible sign.[10] The raising of Lazarus was done openly in the sight of a great crowd, impelling many of the onlookers to believe in him.[11] Finally, Jesus did many other "signs" which are not recorded in this gospel, "but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."[12]

We come now to the question, were the evangelists aware of the Jewish obloquy of Jesus by calling him a sorcerer, or did they publish their gospels containing the many miracle stories unaware of such an interpretation? To put it another way, had the second century cries of sorcery been already present in the latter half of the first century? The evidence seems to show that Mark was conscious of such Jewish objections to Jesus, but that he was not much disturbed by them. Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, make omissions, alterations, and use of new materials in order to take the edge off the calumny to a considerable extent.

All three synoptists report the direct charge that Jesus performed his exorcisms by the agency of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons, and the answer to the charge is given: Satan cannot

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[1]Acts 14:3. [2]Mk. 16:20. [3]Heb. 2:3 f.
[4]Jn. 10:38. [5]Jn. 2:11. [6]Jn. 2:23. [7]Jn. 3:2.
[8]Jn. 4:53 f. [9]Jn. 6:14. [10]Jn. 9:1-41.
[11]Jn. 11:44. [12]Jn. 20:30 f.

cast out Satan; he would never grant anyone the power to cast out and overcome himself and his demons.[1] Matthew and Luke develop the defense against this Jewish defamation by adding the query as to the source of the miracles done by Jewish exorcists: by whom, then, do they cast out demons? Why should Jesus be singled out as a sorcerer, but not they?[2] The Markan defense includes the statement that Jesus does his miracles by the agency of the Holy Spirit and not by an unclean spirit, and this defamation of Jesus constitutes a sin not against him, but against the Holy Spirit, which is the unforgivable sin.[3] Strange to say, Matthew and Luke lose sight of this line of argument, even though they retain all the elements included in the Markan line of thought here.[4] Matthew adds one further defensive remark to this pericope: "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit." In other words, a good deed cannot be ascribed to an evil person, or to an evil power at work in the doer of the good deed.[5] Acts adds its testimony that Jesus could heal the demon-possessed because "God was with him."[6]

The pericope about the healing of the leper, reported in all three gospels, seems to be complete without the addition of the command that the man present himself to the priest and then offer sacrifice in accordance with the command in Leviticus 14: 1 f. This word of Jesus may have been added to the story of the actual healing in order to exhibit the fact that he did his miracles not in the manner of a sorcerer or magician operating outside the religious patterns of Jewish life, but stayed well within the tradition.[7]

Matthew and Luke greatly expand the Markan account of the temptation in the wilderness evidently to show that Jesus had overcome all temptation to indulge in spectacular self-display such as

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[1]Mk. 3:22-27; Mt. 12:24-26, 29; Lk. 11:15-18, 21 f; Mt. 9:32-34.

[2]Mt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19. [3]Mk. 3:28-30.

[4]Mt. 12:28, 31 f; Lk. 11:20; 12:10. [5]Mt. 12:33.

[6]Acts 10:38.

[7]Mk. 1:40-44; Mt. 8:2-4; Lk. 5:12-14.

magicians and sorcerers of the day delighted in.[1] He refused to turn stones into bread, and thereby work a miracle for his own benefit. Changing stones into bread was one of the feats of Simon Magus.[2] Jesus refused to cast himself through the air by jumping from the pinnacle of the Temple. Many stories of flights through the air by wonder-workers were current in the ancient world.[3] Simon Magus is also said to have been able to do this.[4]

Very significantly, Matthew and Luke, working independently, both eliminated from their Markan source the two miracle stories which detail the methods Jesus employed to work his cures on the deaf and dumb man and the blind man.[5] It is likely that they omitted these stories becsuse they smacked too much of the methods employed by common sorcerers and magicians of the time, e.g., the use of saliva, looking into heaven, sighing, and so on. If this is the reason for their omission, we have independent evidence from both the later synoptists that the charge that Jesus was a sorcerer and magician was serious enough to exclude a certain type of miracle stories from their gospels.

Whereas Mark dwells almost exclusively on Jesus' miraculous deeds to the neglect of his ministry as a teacher and a prophet, the later synoptists provide such a bulk of didactic and hortatory materials that the main feature of their gospels cannot be said to be the exhibition of the miraculous in Jesus' ministry. Nevertheless, miracles are as numerous in these longer gospels as they are in Mark. This indicates no tendency to reduce the miraculous in Jesus' life, but only to exclude miracles which describe the methods employed as if they were done by the usual magical means. The proof of Jesus' messiahship on the basis of his supernatural powers is definitely present in Matthew and Luke, and in some respects even more so than in Mark. Matthew follows Mark's accounts of the nature miracles, and Luke does likewise in some instances, but it is to be noted that the latter excludes some of them, the Walking on the Sea, the Feeding of the Four Thousand,

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[1]Mt. 4:3-10; Lk. 4:2-12. [2]Clementine Homilies ii. 32.

[3]Lucian Philopseudes 40.

[4]Vercelli Acts of Peter 32; Passion of Peter and Paul (in James, Apocr. N.T., 470).

[5]Mk. 7:33-36; Mk. 8:22-26.

and the Cursing of the Fig Tree. Luke may not have consciously eliminated these three miracles with the purpose of deleting this type of wonder from Jesus' life, however. If such was his purpose, he would have omitted more, or all, of the nature miracles. In general it may be said, then, that Jewish criticisms of Jesus' miracles were known to the synoptists, especially Matthew and Luke. This did not deter them from repeating the accounts of miracle, but tended to direct their presentations as clear-cut marks of divine power, above all suspicion of employment of sorcery or magic to bring them about.

The author of the Fourth Gospel may also have been concerned about the Jewish contention that Jesus worked his miracles by means of sorcery and magic. He reduces the number of miracles to seven or eight, and excludes all exorcisms, the type most criticized in the first century. We should not understand this trend in John as a desire to reduce the miraculous in Jesus' life, however. On the contrary, the miracles here recorded are more wonderful than those in the synoptics. A first-class nature miracle is that of the turning of water into wine.[1] He healed the nobleman's son (in the synoptics, the centurion's servant) who lay sick in Capernaum while he was in Cana, whereas in the synoptic account Jesus was just entering Capernaum.[2] He healed the lame man who had been in this condition for thirty-eight years, whereas the synoptic account gives no hint of such a prolonged infirmity.[3] He points out that the boat was in the middle of the lake when Jesus reached it by walking on the water, a detail lacking in the synoptic account.[4] The blind man whom he restored to sight was born blind, a detail absent from accounts in the synoptics of healings of the blind.[5] He raised Lazarus to life after he had been dead four days (when in Jewish opinion the soul had permanently left the body). The synoptic accounts of raisings of the dead never imply that there had been such a long interval as that before Jesus effected the restoration.[6] Only the Feeding of the Five Thousand fails to surpass the synoptic parallel miracles in wondrousness. Therefore the reduction in

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[1]Jn. 2:1-10. [2]Jn. 4:46-53. [3]Jn. 5:2-9. [4]Jn.6:16-21.
[5]Jn. 9:1-7. [6]Jn. 11:1-44.

the number of miracles is more than offset by their more marvelous nature. No diminution of the miraculous is to be found in this gospel.

Two of the miracle stories are related in great detail, for the purpose of showing that Jesus' wondrous deeds were not fakes done by a magician, but real, and of lasting efficacy. These are the cure of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus.[1] The fragment of Quadratus (126 A.D.?) also reveals the same interest. It shows that Jesus' miracles were genuine, and were not performed in the occult area beyond human perception, and were of more than transitory effectiveness. Those who were healed "were constantly present," and after Jesus' death they lived for a considerable time; indeed, "some of them have survived even to our own times."[2] It is likely, therefore, that by the time John was written it came to the attention of the author that some Jews were claiming Jesus' miracles were illusory, and the result of trickery, and that the miracles had no lasting effect. Such a judgment would fully account for the otherwise inexplicable wealth of detail which went into these two pericopes. Try as they might, the Jews could not shake the reality of the cure of the blind man. Nor could they claim that a fraud had been perpetrated by substituting a seeing man for the familiar blind beggar. The account of Lazarus is so constructed that it would be impossible to say that Lazarus had been only apparently dead, and that his restoration to life was therefore a fraud. Nowhere in the Fourth Gospel is it implied that the authorities believed Jesus performed actual miracles, even though he did so by being in league with the devil. Hence the interest in showing that the miracles were real. The ruler of the feast testified to the quality of the sin Jesus had made from water even though he knew nothing about Jesus' miracle.[3]

John does not mention that Jesus was accused of being in league with Beelzebub. Perhaps by his day the Jews had given up that mode of attack as unfruitful, because of the force of the

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[1]Jn. 9:1-41; 11:1-45.

[2]Fragment of Quadratus Apology, quoted in Eusebius Eccl. Hist. iv. 3.

[3]Jn. 2:9 f.

synoptic reply to it. Or John's interest was centered chiefly on refuting gentile attacks on Jesus as a magician, and in these circles the charge that he was in league with the devil did not figure. However, in this gospel Jesus several times is accused of having been possessed by a demon.[1] The reply to this is that demons have no power with which to open the eyes of the blind, hence Jesus' miracles sprang from quite another source than that.[2] By establishing the reality of the wondrous deeds Jesus did, John was content to rest his case. True miracles are done only by divine power, and since Jesus performed true miracles, there was no escaping the fact of his divinity. The deeds of Jesus prove that "the Father is in me, and I in the Father."[3] This strain runs all through the gospel, and is stated in the conclusion.[4]

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[1] Jn. 7:20; 8:48 f, 52; 10:20.

[2] Jn. 10:21.

[3] Jn. 10:37 f.

[4] Jn. 20:30 f.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS WAS NOT A REVOLUTIONARY

Herod the Great had held the title "King of the Jews" by the grace of the Roman emperor, but it had been denied his son Archelaus. After the latter's banishment the region was administered directly from Rome by procurators excepting for the brief period of three to five years (38 or 41-44 A.D.) when Galilee and Perea, and then Judea, were attached to the dominions of King Agrippa. Upon his death the country once more was administered by procurators of Roman birth. The appearance of royal pretenders during this whole period from 6 to 70 A.D. caused the procurators no end of concern and difficulty, and troops were dispatched post haste against all such "kings" as soon as their activities became known to the officials. Therefore, when Jesus' accusers, both at the time of his trial, and in the decades which followed, accused him of being a pretender king of the political sort, Roman displeasure was sure to be aroused against Jesus and the Believers.

In the second century the Jews were hardly in a position to accuse Jesus of having headed a revolutionary movement, for by this time three Jewish revolts of national scope (66, 115, and 133) had all too clearly revealed their own attitudes, and they could hardly injure the reputation of Jesus by being the ones to accuse him of revolutionary proclivities. And yet Justin seems to be conscious of such an accusation, for the Jews, he says, scoff at the King of Israel.[2] He sets out to show that Jesus truly was the King of Israel, albeit in a spiritual sense, in fulfillment of the prophecies.[3] Celsus himself, however, does preserve the charge that Jesus was a revolutionary and Christianity a revolutionary movement.[4] It is to be noted, however, that this

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[1]Acts 21:37-39. [2]Justin Dial. 137.

[3]Ibid., 52; 135.

[4]Origen Cels. iii. 7 f.

charge does not proceed from Celsus' Jew, but is his own, evidently gotten from first century Jewish sources. Other passages, coming through Celsus' Jew, refer to Jesus as a robber, but these are by this time interpreted as meaning a thief, not a revolutionary zealot. Needless to say, there is nothing emanating from the first century traditions of Jesus, either Jewish or Christian, which could possibly imply that Jesus had been a thief. Celsus' Jew relies only on the word λῃστής and understands it as meaning κλέπτης , and so he points to Jesus' crucifixion between two robbers as a mark of a life of thievery and crime.[1] This ridiculous interpretation of λῃστής leads him to ask why Jesus should be called a god and not other common criminals.[2]

The rabbinic literature, however, preserved the first century accusation that Jesus was a robber in the sense of a revolutionary pretender king. A Baraitha of the Tannaitic period reads, "Ulla says, Would it be supposed that Jeshu the Nazarene, a revolutionary, had aught in his favor?"[3] A Tosephta of the same period evidently refers to Jesus: "Rabbi Meir used to say, What is the meaning of, For a curse of God is he that is hung? (Deut. 21:23). [It is like the case of] two brothers, twins, who resembled each other. One ruled over the whole world [meaning God], the other took to robbery [listaia]. After a time the one who took to robbery was caught, and they crucified him on a cross. And every one who passed to and fro said, 'It seems that the king is crucified.' Therefore it is said, A curse of God is he that is hung."[4] Passages relating to Ben Netzer (a word similar to Nazarene), who is described as "a robber amongst kings, a king amongst robbers," may be covert references to Jesus.[5] Levy,[6] Keim,[7] and Edersheim[8] think that Jesus is re-

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[1] Ibid., i. 30; ii. 5. [2] Ibid., ii. 44.

[3] Old editions of Sanh. 43a. [4] T. Sanh. IX, 7.

[5] Ketuboth 51b; Jer. Terumoth 46b; Bereshith Rabbah 76.

[6] Jacob Levy, Neuhebräisches und Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmud und Midraschim (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1876-89).

[7] Theodore Keim, The History of Jesus of Nazara, trans. A. Ransom (London: Williams & Norgate, 1873-83), II, 15.

[8] Edersheim, op. cit., I, 222.

ferred to in these passages. Grätz,[1] Jost,[2] and Herford[3] disagree, but only because they are at a loss to explain how Jesus could be called a robber, which they understand to mean thief, not realizing the possibilities of the term as referring to a revolutionary.

From what source did the first century Jews get their information that Jesus was a robber king in the revolutionary sense? As investigation of the synoptics will show, this charge was in circulation before the gospel writers took up their pens, and undoubtedly before the Passion Story took form. Accordingly, the aspersion reaches back to the earliest decades after Jesus, originating no doubt at the time of Jesus' condemnation and execution, and having an unbroken history for at least fifty years thereafter. At least one of Jesus' disciples was known to have been a Zealot, Simon the Zealot,[4] or Simon the Canaanean (Kanna'im),[5] and there is a possibility that this Simon was the brother or father of Judas Iscariot.[6] Mark and Matthew name Simon and Judas as numbers eleven and twelve in their lists. Matthew, who pairs the disciples throughout his list according to blood ties or other relationships some of which we are no longer able to recover, pairs these two.[7]

The temple-cleansing, Jesus' arrest by troops armed for a fight, the charges against Jesus at his trial before Pilate, and the accusation hung on the cross, all must have been known to Jewish critics of the sect of the Believers before the widespread publication of the synoptic gospels, and such knowledge was not drawn from these sources by the Jews. They admit that Jesus' arresters came fully armed as if they were arresting a "robber" revolutionary.[8] They were fully conscious of the now

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[1] Grätz, op. cit., IV, 295, and note 28.

[2] I. M. Jost, Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1857-59), II, 145, note 4.

[3] R. T. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903), pp. 95 f.

[4] Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13.

[5] Mk. 3:18; Mt. 10:4.

[6] Jn. 6:71.

[7] Mk. 3:18 f; Mt. 10:2-4.

[8] Mk. 14:43, 48; Mt. 26:47, 55; Lk. 22:52.

well-worn assertion that Jesus was a revolutionary, and was condemned and executed as such. Yet no attempt was made by them to obscure the designation "king" from Jesus. They preserved it because the Messiah was fully prophesied to be King of Israel.[1] Matthew and Luke go to especial pains to establish Jesus' kingly heritage by inserting genealogical lists which trace his ancestry to David.[2] The angel announced to Mary that her son would ascend to the throne of "his father David."[3] The Magi recognized Jesus as the one born King of the Jews.[4]

Aside from these items in the infancy stories, no further allusion to Jesus as the King of the Jews is found in any gospel until his entry into Jerusalem, as Matthew says, in response to the prophecies of Isaiah.[5] The people hail Jesus as "he (Matthew, the son of David; Luke, the king) that cometh in the name of the Lord."[6] The long-promised king is discovered to be "the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."[7] Luke records that some of the Pharisees present (not necessarily unfriendly: they might have been trying to save Jesus from dire consequences of this rash deed) pled with Jesus to rebuke his disciples for calling him king, but this he refused to do.[8] He then proceeded into the Temple area to cast out all political elements that had no place there. Matthew then inserts the item about the displeasure of the chief priests and the scribes over the children who greeted him in the Temple area with the shout, "Hosanna to the son of David," and Jesus' refusal to check them.[9] Upon his arrest, when Pilate asked him if he were the King of the Jews, he fully confessed that he was.[10] At the conclusion of the trial the soldiers are reported to have dressed him in royal attire and with a crown of thorns, and saluted him in derision: "Hail, King of the Jews!"[11] The inscription on the cross announced to

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etc.

[1] Jer. 23:5; 33:14-16, 19-22; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Hosea 3:5.

[2] Mt. 1:1-16; Lk. 3:23-31. [3] Lk. 1:32 f. [4] Mt. 2:1-11.

[5] Isaiah 62:11 and Zech. 9:9.

[6] Mk. 11:9; Mt. 21:9; Lk. 19:38. [7] Mt. 21:10.

[8] Lk. 19:39 f. [8] Mt. 21:15 f.

[10] Mk. 15:2 f; Lk. 23:2 f; Mt. 27:11 f.

[11] Mk. 15:17 f; Mt. 27:29 f.

all who passed by that Jesus was condemned as the king of the Jews.[1] Jesus' Jewish accusers were on hand at the crucifixion to mock his claim that he was King of the Jews.[2]

The Christian defense.--The gospels so fully present Jesus as a king not because their authors were unfamiliar with the Jewish contention that Jesus was crucified for being a political enemy of Rome with kindly aspirations, but because they wanted to show that Jesus really was a king, though not of the type the Jews had in mind. He was king in the spiritual sense, and in no other. His mission had no relation to political affairs. Therefore his crucifixion as a political revolutionary king was a tragic miscarriage of justice.

The later synoptics show in many places evidences of the desire to erase from the record of Jesus' life any suspicion that he had been a pretender king of the type which had appeared so often in the years 6 to 70. Jesus' pacifistic program is stressed. Zacharias prophesied that this one who was to be born would "guide our feet into the way of peace."[3] The Sermon on the Mount shows clearly what Jesus conceived the Kingdom of God to be, and what kind of people he called into it: the poor in spirit, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, those who are peacemakers.[4] Jesus teaches his followers to turn the other cheek to their enemies, and to meet their unjust demands with more than is asked.[5] They are to love their enemies, do good to them, and pray for those who persecute them.[6] Love of one's enemies is the mark of true righteousness,[7] for God does good both to the just and the unjust;[8] accordingly, Jesus' followers must emulate God in this.[9]

Throughout their gospels Matthew and Luke add to their Markan source items to show that Jesus preached a thorough-going quietistic ethic. In addition to Mark's "For what doth it profit

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[1]Mk.15:26; Mt. 27:37; Lk. 23:38.

[2]Mk. 15:32; Mt. 27:42. Cf. Lk. 23:35.

[3]Lk. 1:79. [4]Mt. 5:3-9. [5]Mt. 5:39-41; Lk. 6:27-30.

[6]Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:35. [7]Mt. 5:46 f; Lk. 6:32-34.

[8]Mt. 5:45. [9]Mt. 5:48.

a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?"[1] they tell how Jesus deplored human attempts to establish the kingdom of God by violence.[2] Jesus' followers are to be wise as serpents but harmless as doves.[3] Though he could have done it, Jesus refused to call down fire and brimstone on the Samaritan village which refused to receive him.[4] He was deeply stirred by the violence which went on in Jerusalem against those who preached peace.[5] He wept over Jerusalem because it did not know "the things that belong unto peace," and was headed for destruction because of its mad revolutionary attitudes.[6] Unless the Jews repented, they all would die at the hands of Rome as those Galileans had died at the hands of Pilate during an uprising at a festival.[7] Within the parable of the Minae, called forth because the disciples "supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear" when Jesus entered Jerusalem, reference is made to what the end of those will be who oppose foreign rule.[8]

Mark's Passion Story has two items which show clearly that Jesus did not oppose Roman rule and had no revolutionary intentions, both of which the later synoptists adopt. The one is the saying, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," indicating that Jesus did not oppose Jewish payment of taxes to the empire.[9] The other is Jesus' complaint that his arresters came out to seize him heavily armed as if he were a "robber," hiding in a lair. He was not this, but a teacher who taught openly in the Temple--conduct anything but that of a revolutionary.[10] To these Matthew and Luke add a number of others. While all three synoptists

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[1]Mk. 8:36; Mt. 16:26; Lk. 9:25.

[2]Mt. 11:12; Lk. 16:16. The "Jewish Gospel," undoubtedly the Gospel According to the Hebrews, reads, "the kingdom of heaven is ravished (or, plundered)" (James, Apocr. N.T., pp. 6 f.).

[3]Mt. 10:16.

[4]Lk. 9:51-56.

[5]Mt. 23:37-39; Lk. 13:34 f.

[6]Lk. 19:41-44.

[7]Lk. 13:1-3. Cf. 13:4 f.

[8]Lk. 19:11-28.

[9]Mk. 12:17; Mt. 22:21; Lk. 20:25.

[10]Mk. 14:48 f; Mt. 26:55; Lk. 22:52 f.

admit that there was some sword-play at the time of Jesus' arrest by an unidentified person,[1] Matthew records Jesus' displeasure by telling the wielder of the sword to put it up, for "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[2] Luke indicates that Jesus showed his displeasure with the use of weapons and his good will toward the wounded man by healing him.[3] Moreover, Luke offers an explanation of the presence of swords in Jesus' company.[4] It is difficult for us to decide precisely what Luke's meaning is, however. Either he ascribes the presence of swords to a misunderstanding of a symbolic saying of Jesus', or he means that Jesus asked that swords be brought in order to fulfill a saying of scripture: "And he was reckoned with the lawless (ἀνόμων)." The latter explanation appears to be the more likely. Matthew takes especial pains to point out that Jesus did not resist arrest in any way. He says that Jesus told Judas to proceed with that for which he had come.[5] He quotes Jesus' saying to the wielder of the sword that if he wished he could command twelve legions of angels from heaven to protect him from arrest, but this he would not do, for the scriptures had prophesied that thus it must be.[6]

We have repeatedly noticed in past connections how Matthew and Luke much more consciously come to Jesus' defense against attacks made against him than Mark does. Such is the case here. The gaps in Mark's armor, which made it possible to draw negative judgments from a reading of him are often closed by the later synoptists. With regard to the charge that Jesus was a common revolutionary, Luke springs to the defense by going so far as to point out the peaceable intentions of Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist. He records how John urged specific groups to changes of heart and practise which, if not brought about, would increase the spirit of revolt.[7] Almost immediately following this material, Luke gives the cause of John's imprisonment, pointing out that it was not for revolutionary tendencies on John's part, but because he had the courage of a prophet to speak out against

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[1] Mk. 14:47; Lk. 22:50. Only Matthew says that he was one of Jesus' company: Mt. 26:51.

[2] Mt. 26:52. [3] Lk. 22:51. [4] Lk. 22:35-38.

[5] Mt. 26:50. [6] Mt. 26:52-54.

[7] Lk. 3:10-14.

evil wherever he found it, even if it was in the tetrarch's own household.[1] Indeed, Mark and Matthew offer a different explanation of John's death than Josephus gives. The latter says that Antipas put John to death to preclude the possibility of the popular John being tempted to lead a revolt.[2] No gospel says anything about this, but John's death is ascribed to the machinations of Herodias, and care is taken to point out that Antipas was very sorry that he had been tricked into a position where for the sake of his oaths he was forced to order John's execution.[3]

The later synoptics bring forward yet other materials which may have been introduced in order to meet the charge that Jesus initiated an abortive revolutionary movement. These deal with the nature of the kingdom of God. The statement of Paul, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,[4] is consistently brought out. The kingdom is within one.[5] The Son of man is king when he and the angels come in glory to judge the earth.[6] Jesus' kingdom is paradise.[7] Jesus and the church were not exercised about the political rule of Rome. The devil is the real ruler of this world, and Jesus refused to win earthly kingdoms, for to do so he would have to receive them from the devil's hands.[8] The kingdom of God is not a political creation, but a spiritual and moral one, founded by the Messiah at the behest of God, to terminate the devil's rule of the world and establish in its place the rule of God with his Messiah as his vicegerent, which rule will bring to an end all wickedness and injustice which so long had plagued the children of men because of the devil's sovereignty over the earth and the great nations. Jesus was not a political Messiah interested in the liberation of Israel from Roman rule and the re-establishment of the throne of David, as so many Jews had conceived the work of the Messiah to be. Rather, his was a spiritual undertaking for the purpose of wiping out the baneful effects of satanic dominion by driving out

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[1]Lk. 3:19 f. [2]Josephus Antiq. XVIII. v. 2.

[3]Mk. 6:17-29; Mt. 14:3-12.

[4]I Cor. 15:50. [5]Lk. 17:21. [6]Mt. 25:34, 40.

[7]Lk. 23:42 f.

[8]Mt. 4:8-10; Lk. 4:5-8. Cf. Wilhelm Bousset, Die Religion des Judentums im spathellenistischen Zeitalter (3d ed.; Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1926), pp. 514 f.

the devil's demons from people held in their grip, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, healing to the lame, life to the dead, and good tidings to the poor and oppressed.[1] Again it is seen that these details of the kingdom preaching are all non-Markan materials.

But that Jesus none the less had died the death of a revolutionary pretender king by the order of the procurator, there was no denying. Stung by the repeated mention of this historical fact by the Jews, the Believers more and more concentrated their defense on demonstrating that Pilate had really not held Jesus guilty of the political crimes charged. Mark says that Pilate found no evil in Jesus' conduct, but "wishing to content the multitude," he did what they asked.[2] Matthew increases Mark's single reference to Pilate's conviction that Jesus was innocent, to three. The Markan reference is repeated, and in addition the item about Pilate's wife is introduced for the purpose of showing Jesus' innocence.[3] At the end Pilate, for fear of a riot, in desperation washed his hands and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this upright man."[4] Matthew's three references are increased to six in Luke. Four separate times Pilate says that he can find no guilt or cause of death in Jesus.[5] In addition he is said to have pled with the Jews, "desiring to release Jesus."[6] Antipas, the man who once is said to have desired Jesus' death,[7] is also introduced to give his testimony that "nothing worthy of death had been done by him" in his, Antipas', dominions.[8] Pilate twice tries to get out of his dilemma by offering to beat Jesus and let him go.[9] Only because the accusers' "voices prevailed,"[10] did he pronounce sentence and deliver Jesus up to their will.[11] In Acts Luke also mentions that Pilate "had determined to release him."[12] Luke also introduces the story of the penitent robber, who testifies that Jesus had done nothing to merit

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[1] Mt. 11:5 f; Lk. 7:22 f; 10:17 f. [2] Mk. 15:14 f.

[3] Mt. 27:19, 23. [4] Mt. 27:24 f.

[5] Lk. 23:4, 14, 22a, 22b. [6] Lk. 23:20. [7] Lk. 13:31-33.

[8] Lk. 23:7-10, 15. [9] Lk. 23:16, 22. [10] Lk. 23:23.

[11] Lk. 23:24 f. [12] Acts 3:13.

this condemnation as a political revolutionary.[1] In our opinion the growth in the number of times Pilate is said to have found Jesus innocent was not born of a desire to load the guilt of the death of Jesus on the Jews and off the shoulders of Pilate, in order to appear in better light with the Roman authorities in the latter part of the first century, but this phenomenon is primarily due to the desire to show that Jesus really was not a revolutionary, and despite his conviction and execution as such, the procurator had really found him innocent. In other words, the defense of Jesus, rather than the defense of the church, accounts for this growth; the defense of Jesus from Jewish attack rather than the allaying of Roman suspicions against Christianity is the main point at issue. The fact that Mark, preeminently a gentile gospel, took no pains to allay possible gentile suspicions supports this view. There is no evidence from the second or third centuries which specifically says that gentiles accused Jesus of having been a revolutionary.

The author of the Fourth Gospel also reveals a consciousness of the Jewish charge that Jesus was a common revolutionary pretender king. Therefore he introduces the item about how the Galilean crowd tried to seize him by force and make him a king, a role which he steadfastly refused to assume.[2] Jesus did not teach subversive doctrines in secret: "I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing."[3] John gets rid of the difficulty of explaining the temple-cleansing, which to all appearances was the act of a revolutionary, by making it an act purely religious and moral in character, motivated by the desire to bring to an end its state of being "a house of merchandise" to which it had sunk because of the traffic carried on there.[4] Moreover, the cleansing is put early in the career of Jesus, so that it was not for this deed that he was arrested, as the synoptics imply. The act of Jesus in this gospel was of such a nature that it could have no objectionable features before Pilate. It was directed toward the purification of Jewish religious life and practice, a purely Jewish concern. The final arrest of Jesus

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[1] Lk. 23:40 f.

[2] Jn. 6:14 f.

[3] Jn. 18:19 f.

[4] Jn. 2:13-17.

is brought about, therefore, not by this deed, but by the religious leaders' fears that the popularity of Jesus and his message of peace would bring about the loss of their position of privilege and wreck the national aspirations by retreating before increasing Roman encroachments on Jewish life and institutions.[1]

John, like Matthew, makes it clear that Jesus did not resist arrest; he told Judas hours before: "What thou doest, do quickly."[2] He revealed his own identity, and so Judas did not need to kiss him in order to show who he was, and no mention of a kiss is found.[3] Jesus disapproved of the use of the sword (Peter now is identified as the one who wielded it), saying that this is the cup the Father willed him to drink.[4]

In John's account of the trial before Pilate, Jesus fully confesses that he is a king, but puts to rest all question of what kind of king he is: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."[5]

Moreover, the tendency noted in the synoptics to multiply the number of times Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent is found in the Fourth Gospel as well. Three times he explicitly says, "I find no crime in him."[6] Once he allows them their point that he is guilty if they will have it so, but wants to release him in accordance with the custom of setting free a prisoner at the passover.[7] Once more it is said that he sought to release Jesus.[8]

Precisely why Pilate finally pronounced sentence is not clearly stated. It appears that John has Pilate present Jesus to them as the king of the Jews in a spiritual sense, hoping they would accept him as such and drop their demands for his death. But the Jews protest that they will have none of it: there is but one king, and he is Caesar.[9] The preceding conversation between Pilate and Jesus took place when the Jews told Pilate that Jesus made himself out to be the Son of God. This filled Pilate with fear, and he questioned Jesus further. This interview once

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[1]Jn. 11:47-50. [2]Jn. 13:27. [3]Jn. 18:3-8.

[4]Jn. 18:10 f. [5]Jn. 18:36 f.

[6]Jn. 18:38; 19:4, 6. [7]Jn. 18:39. [8]Jn. 19:12.

[9]Jn. 19:12-16.

more filled Pilate with the desire to release him. Thus it is implied that Pilate believed, or half-believed, that he was in the presence of a divine being.[1] If this is correct, then Pilate fully recognized the reasonableness of Jesus' claim to be a king in the spiritual sense, and proceeded to present Jesus to the Jews for their approbation as such: "Behold your King!"[2] No other interpretation of these words of Pilate is possible for explaining how he could have used them when he was trying to persuade the Jews to give up their insistent demand for Jesus' death, bound as these words were to antagonize them.

Thus John very delicately works into the story not only Pilate's conviction that Jesus was innocent of being an impostor revolutionary king, but also Pilate's belief in Jesus as a supernatural being qualified to be called King in a religious sense. Thus even Jesus' judge adds his witness to Jesus' divinity! This also gives point to Pilate's refusal to change the placard on the cross to "He said, I am the King of the Jews."[3] To Pilate Jesus truly was the King of the Jews in the religious sense, and so he refuses to make the change. Thus even Pilate is aware that the Jews have committed the dastardly deed of rejecting their heavenly King, and adds his support to the main contention of the early Christian preachers to the Jews. He makes the same confession in his own way that Nathanel had made much earlier: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel."[4]

It is very tempting to conjecture that certain aspects of the Good Shepherd allegory in the tenth chapter are part of the defense of Jesus from charges of being a revolutionary impostor king. The figure of Israel as sheep without a shepherd is found in the Old Testament.[5] The P source of the Pentateuch says that Moses petitioned God to "appoint a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Jehovah be not as sheep which have no shepherd."[6] Complaint against those who are shepherds of the people are frequent in the prophets. They are responsible

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[1]Jn. 19:7-12. [2]Jn. 19:14. [3]Jn. 19:19-22.

[4]Jn. 1:49. [5]I Kings 22:17; II Chron. 18:16.

[6]Numbers 27:17.

for the woes of the flock and the scattering of the sheep (Israel) all over the world.[1] A grave warning is uttered: "Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock!"[2] The shepherds have dismally failed their flock: "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought back that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost."[3]

Ezekiel envisions the Messiah as the shepherd: "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd."[4] "I will make them one nation in the land....and one king shall be king to them all."[5] Israel will be gathered into one people.[6] "I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick."[7] Isaiah prophesies, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young."[8] Jeremiah says that none of the flock will be lacking.[9] This hope seems to be fully reflected in the Johannine passages which speak of how Jesus protected all whom the Father had given him, and none was lost.[10]

The Good Shepherd theme of John might also have been drawn in part from the account in the Book of Enoch of the failure of the seventy shepherds to protect their sheep, their willful slaying of some whom God did not want them to slay, their final judgment, and the sending of the Messiah.[11]

This is the background for the presentation of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. All who came before him were thieves and robbers, κλέπται καὶ λησταί . He will gather all his sheep into

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[1]Nahum 3:18; Jer. 23:1-4, 50:6; Ezek. 34:5, 8; Zech. 10:2 f.

[2]Zech. 11:17. [3]Ezek. 34:4.

[4]Ezek. 34:23. Cf. vs. 24. [5]Ezek. 37:22.

[6]Ezek. 34:11-13; Jer. 31:10. [7]Ezek. 34:16.

[8]Isa. 40:11. Cf. A Zadokite Work 16:3. [9]Jer. 23:4.

[10]Jn. 6:39; 10:28; 17:12; 18:8 f.

[11]Book of Enoch 89:51-91:42.

one fold, and there will be one flock and one shepherd.[1] But is this all? Why are all those prior to Jesus "thieves and robbers"? Surely the author of the Fourth Gospel would not consider national leaders such as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Ezra, or Judas Maccabeus as such. Clement of Alexandria took the expression to apply to the false prophets of Israel in contradistinction to the true prophets.[2] Be that as it may, it is possible that a reference is also made here to the many false prophets and pretender kings of the first century to whom the Jews likened Jesus. There is only one door into the Kingdom of God: Jesus Christ, says the Shepherd of Hermas.[3] The Fourth Gospel in this chapter stresses the point that Jesus is the good shepherd, not a hireling, because he did something they did not: he gave his life for his sheep. This is the test by which one may discover who is the good (true) shepherd, and who is the hireling.[4] We read of several impostor kings and Messiahs who deserted their followers and fled when the Roman troops swooped down upon them. Among such were Simon[5] and the Egyptian Jew,[6] who in each case deserted their followers in the face of disaster, and left them to be cut down. Other instances of the same sort of conduct no doubt were known to those who lived in the first century.

If the author of the Fourth Gospel was faced with the necessity of disproving the assertion that Jesus was but one of the many revolutionary pretenders of his period, he could hardly have chosen a better way to offer his rebuttal. Using a familiar figure from the Old Testament--the Messiah as the royal Shepherd of Israel--he contends that Jesus was not a thief or a robber as so many in his time were, for he endured a willing death for his followers, in decided contrast to the robber "kings" who all too often deserted their followers at the last moment and sacrificed them. Jesus, on the other hand, lost not one of his followers with the exception of Judas, the son of perdition. Instead

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[1]Jn. 10:1-16. [2]Clement of Alexandria Miscellanies, 1.17.

[3]Hermas iii, Similitude ix. 12. [4]Jn. 10:11-15.

[5]Josephus Antiq. XVII. x. 6; Wars II. iv. 2.

[6]Josephus Antiq. XX. viii. 6.

of fleeing when an armed band came out to seize him, Jesus went so far as to reveal his own identity with all cheerfulness. What is more, he made provision for the safety of his disciples and followers, again in brilliant contrast to the shameful manner in which impostor kings and "robbers" ran away from their followers so that they were mercilessly cut down by Roman swords.[1]

In fine, this charge against Jesus appears to have been one of the most troublesome for the Christian missionary of the first century. A careful delineation of Jesus' life and message was necessary to show that revolutionary motives and fantastic dreams of regal power were farthest from his mind. Hence a very considerable part of both the Passion story and the other materials were devoted primarily or secondarily, as the individual cases might be, to the overcoming of this malignant slander.

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[1] Jn. 18:8 f. Cf. Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, IV, 266.

CHAPTER V

JESUS DID NOT PERISH IGNOBLY

The church's religious interpretation of Jesus' sufferings and death.--From the very beginning the church emphasized that Jesus' death was brought about by the scheming of the Jews rather than by the Romans. Paul mentions the fact in his earliest letter.[1] In the synoptics Jesus always predicts his sufferings and death at the instigation of the elders, chief priests, and scribes.[2] After Jesus' entry into Jerusalem they were the ones who plotted his death, not the Roman officials.[3] Jesus was arrested at their instruction and by their men.[4] They pronounced Jesus worthy of death at the trial before Caiaphas.[5] They brought him before Pilate to be his accusers.[6] Finally, they pursued Jesus even to the cross, scoffing at him as he hung there.[7] The tragedy which took place because of their blind and determined hostility is dramatically suggested by the darkness which covered the earth while Jesus died. This phenomenon frequently accompanied tragic events described by ancient writers, both Jewish and Greek.[8] But it might also have been recorded as a fulfillment of a prophecy of Amos.[9]

Acts is also filled with references to Jesus' death as at the hand of the Jews.[10] The same is the case in the Fourth

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[1] I Thess. 2:14 f.

[2] Mk. 8:31-33; Mt. 16:21; Lk. 9:22-27; Mk. 10:33; Mt. 20:18; cf. Mk. 12:1-12; Mt. 21:33-46; Lk. 20:9-19.

[3] Mk. 14:1; Mt. 26:3; Lk. 22:2.

[4] Mk. 14:43; Mt. 26:47; Lk. 22:52.

[5] Mk. 14:53, 55, 60; Mt. 26:57, 59, 63; Lk. 22:66.

[6] Mk. 15:1, 10 f, 13; Mt. 27:1, 20-24; Lk. 23: 1f, 5, 10, 18, 21, 23.

[7] Mk. 15:31; Mt. 27:41; Lk. 23:35.

[8] Branscomb, op. cit., p. 296. [9] Amos 8:9.

[10] Acts 2:36; 3:13; 4:10; 5:30.

Gospel.[1] Pilate merely carried out the assent of God to Jesus' death, and the Jews therefore had the greater sin, for they instigated the entire proceedings against him.[2] Second and third century literature is equally unanimous in the matter. Jesus "was pierced by the Jews."[3] A fragment of Melito blames them.[4] The devil made Annas and Caiaphas do what they did.[5] The Jews were Christ-killers.[6]

For a short time some Believers conceded that the Jews were not fully responsible for their prominent part in Jesus' death. Jesus is reported to have prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[7] In one of his sermons Peter is quoted as saying, "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."[8] But this was gradually changed. The Jewish leaders' religious and moral blindness and lack of the true knowledge of the prophetic writings was blamed for their failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah when he came.[9] As time went on, the killing of Jesus was slanderously regarded as an act to be expected from such a people as the Jews, for they killed the prophets before him.[10]

On their part the Jews never denied their complicity in or chief responsibility for, the death of Jesus. The rabbinical passages which refer to Jesus' death unanimously imply or expressly state that he was under a Jewish judgment, and Roman participation in bringing about Jesus' death is never intimated.[11] Nor do the gospels at any time reflect an attempt on the part of the

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[1]Jn. 5:18; 7:1, 7, 19 f, 25, 30, 32, 44-48; 8:37, 40-44.

[2]Jn. 19:11. [3]Apology of Aristides, Syriac version, 2.

[4]R. Harris, Apology of Aristides ("Texts and Studies"; Cambridge: The University Press, 1893), I, i. 55.

[5]An unpublished disputation between the devil and Christ, found in a Jerusalem MS, Cod. 66, S. Sep., quoted in Harris, op. cit., I, 1, 56. Cf. spurious Ep. of Ignatius to the Philippians 4.

[6]Irenaeus Heres. III. xii. 6. Cf. longer version of Ignatius Ep. to the Magnesians 11; spurious Ep. of Ignatius to Hero 2.

[7]Lk. 23:34. [8]Acts 3:17.

[9]Acts 13:27; I Cor. 2:7-9, which quotes a combination of Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17.

[10]E.g., Mt. 23:39-35; Lk. 11:47-51; Acts 7:52.

[11]Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (London: Williams and Norgate, 1903), p. 86.

Jews to escape responsibility for their deed. On the other hand, they fully acknowledged their part, making no apology for it, for they were convinced that the death of Jesus was a just punishment of one who had deceived Israel and led the people astray.

To the early Believers it was an intolerable thought that Jesus was in any sense a criminal, or a revolutionary, or under a curse of God; and they were fully convinced that Jesus' death from the historical viewpoint was a tragic miscarriage of justice. Nor could his death have been an accident which had upset the divine plan. After their resurrection experiences, therefore, they came to view Jesus' death as God's will. Far from coming to an accursed end, or meeting death by a combination of untoward circumstances, his death was increasingly viewed as being of the most far-reaching cosmic significance. We have a story of a woman who sensed that Jesus' approaching death was of great importance, and she was led to perform a symbolic act by anointing his body in advance.[1] At the most primitive stage of the preaching to the gentiles the message was proclaimed that "Christ died for our sins," and this interpretation of Jesus' death became a fixed dogma of the church.[2] The Old Testament was assiduously studied for the light it might throw on the death of Jesus, and one passage after another was found which seemed to them proof that the Messiah should die a vicarious death for Israel's sins. Christ's death was increasingly viewed, therefore, as a vicarious one for all believers in him.[3] Moreover, by his death Jesus overcame the devil and his power of death over mankind,[4] as had been prophesied in the Testament of Levi: "He shall open the gates of paradise, and he shall remove the threatening sword against Adam. And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life."[5]

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[1] Mk. 14:3-9; Mt. 26:6-13; Jn. 12:2-8.

[2] I Thess. 5:10; Rom. 4:25; 5:6, 8; I Cor. 15:3; Jn. 3:16-21; I Jn. 4:14; I Peter 2:24; 3:18; 4:4; Rev. 1:5; Ep. of Polycarp 1. 9; Barnabas 5.

[3] II Cor. 5:14 f; Heb. 2:9; 8:3; 9:28; 10:10, 12, 14-18; 13:12; Mk. 10:45; Mt. 20:28; Rev. 5:9; I Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14.

[4] II Cor. 5:18f; Heb. 2:14 f; Jn. 12:31 f; I Jn. 3:8; II Tim. 1:10; Ignatius Ephesians 18.

[5] Test. Levi 18:10 f.

Jesus was likened to the sacrificial lamb.[1] He purchased the Elect with his own blood, and gave them eternal life.[2] Yet other views of Jesus' suffering and death were advanced: they perfected him as author of man's salvation;[3] by his cross the enmity between Jews and gentiles was ended;[4] his death was an act of love;[5] and because he willingly suffered and died, he has been exalted and crowned with glory and honor.[6]

Jesus did not die an accursed death.--These interpretations of the death of Jesus were highly offensive to the Jews. In the first place, in their view Jesus had died an impostor, sinner, sorcerer, and revolutionary. What is more, he had died under a curse of God, for he was hung on a cross.[7] To ascribe messianic honors to such a one was bad enough, but to go beyond this and make Jesus practically equal with God was more than the Jews could endure. Of itself the death of Jesus would not be as offensive to gentiles, however, for the mystery cults preached many a hero god who had suffered, died, and risen again. Gentiles would care not at all whether Jesus were the Jewish Messiah or not, for the messianic concept was meaningless to them. To be hung on a cross was not a curse of God in their eyes, for they had no scripture which said it was. Because Jesus suffered and died was necessarily no basis for the suspicion that he was an impostor, sorcerer, or deceiver. The Christian preacher to the gentiles found it necessary to reassure his hearers on but one point: to show that Jesus was not a political revolutionary who had been condemned to death as such. Once a Paul or a Barnabas had overcome this objection, the death of Jesus was no longer of itself a stumbling-block to faith in Jesus as a divine being. But not so with the Jew. It was beyond belief that God would allow his Messiah to suffer an ignominious end, especially one on which God himself had pronounced a curse. In every respect the death of Jesus was a stumbling-block of all but insurmountable size

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[1] I Cor. 5:7; Acts 8:32; Jn. 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:12.

[2] Acts 20:28; Jn. 6:50 f; Hermas iii, Similitude v. 6.

[3] Heb. 2:10, 18. [4] Eph. 2:13-22. [5] Jn. 15:13.

[6] Acts 2:33; Phil. 2:9; Jn. 17:1 f, 5; Heb. 2:9; 10:12.

[7] Deut. 21:23.

for the Jewish mind. Accordingly, "it was less difficult for non-Jews to account for these facts [of Jesus' manner of death] in such a way that Jesus might emerge as a figure with religious value."[1]

Celsus' Jew tried hard to disprove Jesus' divinity by pointing to his crucifixion and death. "We both found him guilty, and condemned him as deserving of death."[2] Jesus had no defense to offer in his own behalf.[3] He was unable to frustrate the attempt against his life, which he could have done, and would be expected to do, if he had been divine.[4] "He received no assistance from the Father, and was unable to aid himself."[5] No calamity befell Pilate for his part in Jesus' death.[6] Therefore there was no divine displeasure at the time of the crucifixion in the form of earthquake and darkness as the gospels report.[7] Jesus is certainly not to be considered the Son of God because he suffered; if so, countless others who have been punished would also be worthy of divine honors.[8] The least Jesus could have done, if he really were divine, would have been to disappear from the cross, rather than remain and submit to death.[9] It is inconceivable that God would let his Son suffer, and if Jesus really were the Son of God, his sufferings were only apparent and not real.[10] But his sufferings were real, for if they were not, "why does he mourn and lament, and pray to escape the fear of death, expressing himself in terms like these: 'O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me'?"[11] If Jesus died willingly, it was for no better purpose than a ludicrous desire to teach men to despise punishment.[12] Such are the slurs thrown at the church's doctrine by Celsus' Jew. Justin had to face critics who asserted that the passion story of Jesus was but another of the diabolical myths of a dying and rising god which were common among the gen-

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[1] D. W. Riddle, "The Gospels: Their Origin and Growth" (Unpublished typescript, 1938), p. 7.

[2] Origen Cels. ii. 10. [3] Ibid., i. preface.

[4] Ibid., ii. 33. [5] Ibid., i. 54. [6] Ibid., ii. 34.

[7] Ibid., ii. 59. [8] Ibid., ii. 47. [9] Ibid., ii. 68.

[10] Ibid., ii. 23. [11] Ibid., ii. 24.

[12] Ibid., ii. 38,73.

tiles.[1]

Another basic Jewish contention was that the Messiah would not die a death on which the law pronounces a curse. In a Tosephta of the Tannaitic period R. Meir quotes Deut. 21:23 and then mentions that Jesus was hung on a cross, pointing out that therefore he died under a curse.[2] Christian literature of the second century shows that for this reason the cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews.[3] Justin's Jewish opponent is scandalized at the thought that the Messiah should suffer and die, especially a death involving a curse.[4] His attitude to Jesus is summed up thus: "This so-called Christ of yours was dishonorable and inglorious, so much so that the last curse contained in the law of God fell on him, for he was crucified."[5] Justin counters by finding many Old Testament passages to prove that thus it was prophesied.[6]

Barnabas claims that Jesus willed to suffer, in order to fulfill certain prophecies.[7] In a later chapter he maintains that the crucifixion was prophesied in a passage he quotes, the source of which is unknown to us.[8] Barnabas also finds two types which are not scriptural: the two goats and the injunction that priests should eat the innards of the goat unwashed in vinegar.[9]

Irenaeus demonstrates that Jesus' sufferings and death were fully prophesied.[10] Tertullian fully shows that such things were to happen to the Messiah, basing his demonstration on both

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[1]Justin Dial. 69. [2]T. Sanh. IX, 7.

[3]Ignatius Ephesians 18; Ep. of Polycarp 12; fragment of Aristo of Pella's Dialogue between Jason and Papiscus, quoted by Jerome in Comm. to Gal. 3:13.

[4]Justin Dial. 89 f, 93, 95 f. [5]Ibid., 32.

[6]Justin Dial. 90-105 uses the following: Ex. 17:8-12; Deut. 33:13-17; Num. 21:6-9; Ps. 3:4 f; Isa. 53:9; 65:2, Ps. 22:16-18; Ps. 22:1 f, 6-8, 11-14, 16, 19-21. He also uses Isa. 58:2 in his Apology i. 35; Isa. 57:1 in Apol. i. 48; and Isa 52:13-15; 53:1-8 in Apol. i. 50.

[7]Barnabas 5, quoting Isa. 53:8; Zech. 13:7; a mixture of Pss. 22:17, 21, and 119:120; and Isa. 50:6 f.

[8]Barnabas 12. The suggestion that it was based on Hab. 2:11 is most unlikely.

[9]Barnabas 7. [10]Irenaeus Heres. IV. xxxiii. 12.

"types" and prophecies.[1] The Jewish reproach that Jesus died under a curse mentioned in Deuteronomy is answered by Tertullian with the arbitrary assertion that the passage refers only to criminals who have committed a sin worthy of death, and cannot be applied to Jesus, for he was without sin. Jesus died not because of any evil in him, but in order that he might thereby fulfill the prophecies.[2]

The question arises, was Paul acquainted with the objection to Jesus on the ground of his having died an accursed death? It appears that he was, for he implies that some men spoke of Jesus as being anathema: under a curse.[3] He definitely states that the cross is a stumbling-block to the Jews.[4] To them that perish [i.e., the gentiles] it is foolishness.[5] Jews persecuted Christians for preaching the cross.[6] According to Acts, Paul with the greatest labor sought for three sabbaths to prove to the Jews that the scriptures taught that "it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ."[7]

Paul definitely deals with the problem of Deut. 21:23 and the curse pronounced in it against all who are hung, by showing that "as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them."[8] Paul then sublimates Jesus' condition of having been under a curse by saying that he became a curse for us in order to free us from the other curse, that pronounced against all who have failed to keep the law. In addition, Jesus voluntarily became a curse so that by accomplishing freedom from the law, the gentiles, too, might share the blessing of Abraham.[9] Paul's dialectic therefore

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[1]Tertullian Apol. 21; An Answer to the Jews 10; Against Marcion iii. 6; iv. 40.

[2]Tertullian An Answer to the Jews 10, quoting Pss. 35:12; 69:4; 22:16; 69:21; 22:18.

[3]I Cor. 12:3.

[4]Gal. 5:11; I Cor. 1:23.

[5]I Cor. 1:18.

[6]Gal. 6:12.

[7]Acts 17:1-5.

[8]Deut. 27:26.

[9]Gal. 3:10-14.

fully recognizes the accursed form of the death of Jesus, but, like John after him, he sublimates this death to one of the most impressive marks of Jesus' glory and honor. Therefore with no hesitation he preaches this greatest handicap against Jesus, and "openly sets [him] forth crucified."[1] "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."[2]

The other aspect of the death of Jesus, his suffering, does not appear to have been a problem for Paul in his relations with the gentiles, for the concept of a suffering redeemer god was native to their religious background. The synoptic gospels take up the problem of a suffering Messiah, however. Such a concept was unusual to the first century Jews, it may hardly be doubted, even if it was not unknown to them. Jesus finds it necessary to teach his disciples over and over again that it was prophesied that the Messiah should suffer.[3] Even Peter was scandalized at such a doctrine, and he drew a sharp rebuke from Jesus.[4] Jesus goes up to Jerusalem in full consciousness that he will fulfill the prophetic words by suffering many things and being rejected by men.[5] The crucified is really God's elect; for "have ye not read even this scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; this was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes."[6] It is clear, therefore, that the synoptists defended Jesus' ignominious sufferings and manner of death with the assertion that they were predicted by the prophets. Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22 and 69 were the main portions of scripture where this support was found.

Many writers claim there is no evidence that current messianic hopes envisioned a Messiah who would suffer. To be sure, none of the literature of the second and first centures B.C. and the first century A.D., so rich in messianic materials, contain the concept with the possible exception of A Zadokite Work. But the Talmud and Midrashim definitely teach such a concept.

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[1] Gal. 3:1. [2] Gal. 6:14.

[3] Mk. 8:31-33; 9:12, 31 f; Mt. 16:21-23; 17:11 f; Lk. 24:20 f.

[4] Mk. 8:33; Mt. 16:23. [5] Lk. 17:25; 18:31.

[6] Mk. 12:10 f; Mt. 21:42; Lk. 20:17, all quoting Ps. 118: 22 f.

They variously present the time of the Messiah's suffering as being (1) before he becomes a man, (2) in the period before he is revealed, (3) during the messianic year-week, or (4) at the beginning of his entry upon his messianic office. His suffering is also variously conceived: (1) he will be persecuted by heavenly powers; (2) the appointed time of his work as deliverer will be delayed; (3) he will suffer from leprosy, or (4) from other forms of bodily disease or suffering; (5) he will suffer in prison under the scorn, mockery, and slander of his enemies; or (6) he will temporarily lose his kingly rule. The purpose of the Messiah's suffering is the expiation of Israel's sins. He suffers vicariously for his people. Those who are not Jews will never share in this benefit.[1] It is extremely doubtful if we are justified in using any of this material as evidence of what the first century Jews believed about the Messiah. These materials seem to show the impact of Christian doctrine upon the Jewish concept of the Messiah after 150 A.D., rather than the state of Jewish belief in the first century.

Enslin maintains that only Luke-Acts employed the figure of Isaiah's suffering servant to portray Jesus.[2] It is true that Luke-Acts is the only work which actually includes quotations from the suffering servant chapter,[3] but the identification of Jesus by Mark and Matthew with unspecified prophecies of the Messiah's suffering can only mean that Isaiah 53 was definitely in mind, for few portions of scripture have this concept with remotely comparable clarity or fulness. The habit of searching scripture for validations of Jesus began very early, and certainly the possibilities of Isaiah 53 would not be overlooked or passed by until so late a date as the composition of Luke-Acts. Many other times Mark and Matthew introduce materials in response to scriptural prophecies, without actually quoting or indicating what the prophecies were.

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[1]The only possible exception is Targum to Ps. 72:17. Strack and Billerbeck, op. cit., II, 274-92, lists and discusses the passages in which the suffering Messiah is mentioned. They are Midrash HL 6, 10 (124 b; Midrash Psalms XVIII, v. 68b; Sanh. 93b, 98b, 98a; Midrash Samuel XIX. 1. 51a; Pesikta Rabbathi, XXXI, 146 b; XXXIV, 159b; XXXVI, 161a, 162a; XXXVII, 162b, 163a; Midrash Konen (Beth ha-Midrash 2, 29, 25); Sepher Zerubbabel (Beth ha-Midrash 2, 54, 19).

[2]Enslin, op. cit., pp. 173 f. [3]Lk.22:37; Acts 8:26-39.

Other books after the synoptics also contain references to the prophets who foretold that the Christ must suffer.[1] But the Fourth Gospel proceeds in an entirely different fashion. In it are no prophecies of suffering, nor any allusions to such. All references of the synoptics to Jesus' passion are either toned down or deleted, with the one exception of the mistreatment Jesus received at the Jewish and Roman trials.[2] There is no agony in the garden. No real suffering occurs on the cross. No one mocked him. No darkness covered the land to indicate God's wrath over what was transpiring. No cry of forsakenness passed Jesus' lips. No loud final cry was uttered at the moment of death. Jesus accepted the vinegar only in order to fulfill the scripture.[3] At the end Jesus said, "It is finished," showing that all along he was consciously carrying through a predetermined role with complete equanimity.

In such a manner the offense of the cross is overcome by John. Jesus fully accepted this role: it was not forced upon him. The cross is the means by which Jesus returns to the Father. It is the first step in the Father's glorification of the Son.[4] Jesus' first public statement in this gospel is a prediction of his resurrection.[5] Jesus had to be "lifted up" in order to bring eternal life, even as Moses lifted up the serpent to save human life.[6] God gave his Son in death as evidence of his love for the world.[7] So in John's eyes Jesus' death was a cosmic drama. John is almost completely indifferent to such mundane matters as the specific historical causes of Jesus' condemnation and death. Jewish opposition had little or nothing to do with it: Jesus' death was the work which God sent him to accomplish. Indeed, Jewish opposition appeared only because scripture had ordained that they should hate him without a cause.[8] The historical circumstances which brought about the death of Jesus are almost completely overlaid with theological dress, of a kind which was in style in the Graeco-Roman world.

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[1]Acts 3:18, 24; 17:2 f; 26:22 f; I Peter 1:11.

[2]Jn. 18:22 f; 19:1-3.

[3]Jn. 19:28. [4]Jn. 17. [5]Jn. 2:19. [6]Jn. 3:14 f.

[7]Jn. 3:16. [8]Jn. 15:25, quoting Pss. 35:19; 69:4.

Another very difficult task for the Christian preachers to the Jews was to justify the death of Jesus, for the contemporary messianic expectations without exception, we believe, envisioned a Messiah who would reign forever. It was undreamt of that the Messiah should die. But Jesus had died, and so if the claims for his messiahship were to find converts among the Jews, proof had to be furnished that the Messiah must die. One passage, IV Ezra 7:29, dating well after 70 A.D., is the only one which suggests that the Messiah should die. It appears at a point where there are two irreconcilable ideas, and so little importance should be attached to it. But it does say that the Messiah first will "rejoice the survivors four hundred years" before he dies.[1] Hence this passage of itself could not have affected Jewish thought in the period of gospel formation.

On the other hand, there are many passages which teach that the Messiah will live and reign forever.[2] Not until past 150 A.D. did the idea of a dying Messiah make a real beginning in Jewish thought.[3] He was to be the son of Joseph, not of David, on the basis of Deuteronomy 33:17, coupled with Jeremiah 49:20 and Zechariah 12:10-12. The sources are enumerated in Strack and Billerbeck.[4] According to these, this Messiah ben Joseph will appear first in upper Galilee, whence he will lead his troops victoriously to Jerusalem. He will rebuild the now destroyed Temple, and will live in Jerusalem in peace for forty years. Thereupon Gog and Magog will draw near, attack Jerusalem for twelve months, and kill Ben Joseph. The people will then raise the great death lament of Zech. 12:10-12, and flee to the desert. After forty-five days of sifting and testing the deliverance will commence, in which the Messiah ben David will reveal himself in Rome and destroy the Roman empire. Some sources, usually the earlier ones, do not say who will kill the Messiah ben Joseph; others say it will be the anti-christ Armilos. Still other sources say the two Messiahs will be contemporaries, rather

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[1] IV Ezra 7:28.

[2] Jer. 24:6; Ezek. 37:25; Joel 4:20; Dan. 6:27; Sibylline Oracles iii. 49 f, 767; Pss. Sol. 17:4; Enoch 62:14; Jn. 12:34, etc.

[3] Edersheim, op. cit., II, 434, says the idea did not appear until the third century A.D.

[4] Strack & Billerbeck. op. cit.. II. 292-99.

than the one following the other. Messiah ben Joseph's death in no case, however, is viewed as an expiatory one. It is natural, therefore, that the figure in Isaiah 53 is never associated with this Messiah. Moreover, Messiah ben David is not a reincarnation of the slain Messiah ben Joseph. Ben Joseph does not return to life.

It cannot be supposed that the idea of such a preliminary Messiah ben Joseph had currency in the first century. No literature, Jewish or Christian, can be adduced in support of it. Out of necessity Christian preachers turned to ancient scripture to find their evidence that the Messiah must die. This they did from very early times, as the primitive formula in use in the church shows.[1] What scriptures were used to furnish this proof we can only guess, but they were likely Ps. 22:15 and Isaiah 53:9.

It is altogether clear that the synoptists, and most likely their sources too, were fully aware of the difficulty of urging upon the Jews a Messiah who had died. Matthew leaves no doubt that he knew the Jewish contention that Jesus was not the Messiah for he had died under a curse, forsaken of God. He directly introduces the Jewish argument: "He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God."[2] According to the Jewish view, if Jesus really had been the Messiah, God would have rescued him from this accursed death. Mark and Luke also show they were familiar with the Jewish argument that if Jesus were the Messiah he would have come down from the cross and confounded his enemies.[3]

Certainly the necessities of apologetic to the heathen would not have required the many references to Jesus' death as a necessary fulfillment of the ancient scriptures. But to Jewish hearers and readers this matter needed much stressing. Hence the point is reiterated many times in the gospels.[4] Luke adds two significant materials. The two men on the road to Emmaus are taught by the risen Jesus that the scriptures declared that so

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[1] I Cor. 15: 3. [2] Mt. 27:43.

[3] Mk. 15:30 f; Lk. 23:35, 37.

[4] Mk. 8:31-33; Mt. 16:21-23; Lk. 9:22; Mk. 9:31; Mt. 17: 22 f; Lk. 9:44; Mk. 10:33 f; Mt. 20:18 f; Lk. 18:31-33. Cf. Mk. 14:49; Mt. 26:56; Mk. 14:21; Mt. 26:24; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:37.

it must be.[1] That same evening Jesus appeared to the eleven, pointing out to them that "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms" all taught that the Messiah must die and rise again. "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures" on this matter, for heretofore they had not so understood them.[2]

Acts also goes to some length to establish Jesus' death as a necessary fulfillment of prophecies to that effect. By putting him to death the Jews unwittingly fulfilled these prophecies.[3] Jesus was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."[4] "Thy [God's] hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass" Jesus' death at the hands of the authorities.[5]

So far we have noted two means of accounting for Jesus the Messiah's death: it was prophesied, and the Father willed that so it should be. To these was added a third: Jesus was not the victim of circumstances beyond his control; rather, he consciously and willingly went to his death. Hebrews declares that Jesus "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame."[6] In the synoptics the reason for Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is not to work there, but to die there. He goes fully conscious of the end that awaits him. The Agony in Gethsemane intends to bring out that Jesus' and the Father's will were in accord. Luke brings this out even more sharply by removing all elements of soul struggle and hesitation on Jesus' part. Matthew includes in the scene of the arrest the item about Jesus' refusal to use his divine powers to prevent arrest, and how Jesus urges Judas on to his dastardly deed.[7] Because Jesus chose to die, this is the explanation of his refusal to defend himself against the accusations being made at his trial before the high priest.[8] Nor did he defend himself before Pilate.[9] Had Jesus chosen to speak in his own defense, he would have forced the officials to free him for lack of a basis for his condemnation, and so his determination to die would have been frustrated.

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[1]Lk. 24:25-27. [2]Lk. 24:44-46. [3]Acts 13:27, 29.

[4]Acts 2:23. [5]Acts 4:28. [6]Heb. 12:2.

[7]Mt. 26:50, 52-54. [8]Mk. 14:61; Mt. 26:63.

[9]Mk. 15:4 f; Mt. 27:12-14.

For some reason Luke excludes these two items. Perhaps he desired that nothing should detract from or obscure the dramatic character of Jesus' announcement to his accusers that he was the Son of God and King of the Jews.

Mark and Matthew include in their gospels the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which is the first verse of the Psalm so heavily depended on to prove that the Messiah should die.[1] But Luke evidently felt the difficulty of such a cry coming from the lips of him who had willingly accepted suffering and death for the sake of the will and counsel of God. Therefore he removes this word from the cross, and at the end introduces another verse from the Psalms in its stead: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."[2]

All three synoptists show that God did not approve of what was done, and that Jesus really had not been deserted by him to an accursed death, for they report the darkness[3] and strange phenomena when the moment of death came.[4] Perhaps the rending of the veil was meant to teach that God at that moment deserted his habitation in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. We recall how the ancient prophets taught that God left the Temple of Solomon, thus allowing it to be destroyed by the Babylonian invader.[5]

Matthew adds another touch to show that Christ really does abide forever. After he had risen from the dead he says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."[6] His presence among those who worship him is never-failing: "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them."[7]

The author of the Fourth Gospel was well aware of Jewish criticisms of the doctrine of a Messiah who had died: "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how

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[1] Mk. 15:34; Mt. 27:46, quoting Ps. 22:1.

[2] Lk. 23:46, quoting Ps. 31:5.

[3] Mk. 15:33; Mt. 27:45; Lk. 23:44.

[4] Mk. 15:38; Mt. 27:51-53; Lk. 23:45.

[5] Ezek. 10:1-22; 11:22-25; Zech. 1:16 f. Cf. E. J. Goodspeed, The Story of the Old Testament (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press), pp. 65 f.

[6] Mt. 28:20. [7] Mt. 18:20.

sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?"[1] He comes to Jesus' defense in various ways. Like Luke, he omits the cry of forsakenness from the cross. And into the body of his gospel he puts these words: "He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing unto him."[2] Again, "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is come, that he shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."[3] This evidence from Luke and John quite conclusively shows that the Markan-Matthean report of the cry of forsakenness offered considerable embarrassment to the church in the face of the Jewish taunts. The fairly early Gospel of Peter meets the issue by changing the wording to "My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me. And when he had so said, he was taken up."[4]

As has been said, John treats Jesus' suffering and death as stages in his glorification.[5] A simile is introduced to explain the necessity of Jesus' death. As a grain of wheat must die first before it can bring forth fruit in abundance, so it was with Jesus.[6]

John more frequently and more explicitly shows that Jesus could not have been put to death had it not been his will. This is one of the major interests of the gospel, it would seem, for it is scattered through it from one end to the other.[7] The Farewell Discourse[8] clearly implies many times that Jesus is now ready to embark on a chosen course which has been predetermined by him and the Father. The final events are also told in such a way as to dismiss all slanders about Jesus having died an unwilling and accursed death, rejected and forsaken of God. There is no suggestion of an inner conflict in Jesus' mind, and no agony in the garden is to be found. Jesus could not have been taken into custody against his will. At the mere revelation of his

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[1]Jn. 12:34. [2]Jn. 8:29. [3]Jn. 16:32. Cf. 8:16.

[4]Gospel of Peter 19, Harnack's numbering.

[5]Jn. 12:23; 13:31; chap. 17. [6]Jn. 12:24.

[7]Jn. 2:19-25; 6:64, 70 f; 8:20, 59; 10:17 f, 39; 12:36; 13:31; 18:6, 11; 19:10-12a, 30.

[8]Jn. 13:31-17:26.

identity all the soldiers who had come to arrest him fell helpless to the ground.[1] Jesus would brook no efforts on the part of his followers to save him from arrest.[2] Pilate could deliver Jesus to death only because such was the plan and purpose of the Father and the Son: "Thou wouldest have no power over me, except it were given thee from above."[3] Jesus was not a broken, pitiable figure on the way to his death. He manfully bore his cross himself.[4] While he was on the cross neither the passersby, the Jewish authorities, nor the robbers crucified with him mocked him or called scornfully to him to save himself if he could. No cry of forsakenness passed his lips. Before he expired Jesus did not utter a loud cry as in Mark and Matthew, or a quotation of Psalm 31 as in Luke, but the simple words, "It is finished," thus announcing the completion of the consciously undertaken work of redemption.[5]

John also goes into some detail to explain more fully than the synoptists had done, why Jesus was buried the same day. Mark, it is true, implies that Jesus' body was removed because the sabbath was at hand, although the passage is ambiguous enough to admit of a translation which does not convey this thought at all. Matthew makes no mention of why Jesus' body was so soon removed, beyond the statement that Joseph wanted the body. Nor is it clear that Luke regarded the body's hasty removal as due to the drawing on of the sabbath. But John makes it very explicit: "Because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day)," the Jews wanted to hasten the death of Jesus by getting Pilate's order to break the legs of the criminals.[6] Jesus was laid in a tomb near the garden in great haste because the Preparation was at hand.[7]

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[1]Jn. 18:5 f. [2]Jn. 18:11, 36. [3]Jn. 19:11.

[4]Jn. 19:17. Loisy does not think this item was included to combat the gnostic teaching that Simon had been substituted on the cross for Jesus (Irenaeus Heres. I. xxiv. 4), as some scholars have conjectured. Alfred Loisy, Le Quatrieme Evangile (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1903), p. 872.

[5]Jn. 19:30. [6]Jn. 19:31. [7]Jn. 19:42.

Why does John go to such lengths to explain Jesus' burial on the same day as his death? A Jewish interest is involved here, and not a gentile, we may be sure. But since the gospel was written almost exclusively for gentile readers, the only reason can be that the Jews were spreading evil interpretations of Jesus' hasty burial. These were unquestionably based on Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God." The tradition that Jesus was hastily buried was known to them, if from no other source, from Mark and the later synoptics. As the Mishna shows, Jews in the first century still regarded hung and crucified persons as accursed of God. After a description of how a man is hanged we read, "And they let it [the corpse] down at once: if it remained there over night a negative command is thereby transgressed, for it is written, His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is a curse against God."[1] Accordingly, the Jews interpreted Jesus' hasty burial as another indication of his accursedness in the sight of God. It appears that John sought to overcome this line of attack by representing that Jesus' burial on the day of his death was only to prevent the bodies hanging there on the sabbath. John's point is weak, however, for he is unable to produce an injunction on this point from the law.

The resurrection not a fraud.--In the early stages of reflection upon how Jesus rose from the dead, the church taught that he was raised by God the Father.[2] But later the conviction was often expressed that Jesus was so all-powerful that he raised himself.[3]

To the earliest Believers the resurrection of Jesus was the great proof positive that he was the Messiah, or, rather, that his rising

> proved that he had now attained to his Messiahship-- that the dignity which had hitherto been latent had become actual.....It was only in a future and potential sense that Jesus could claim in his lifetime to be the Messiah.....

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[1] Sanh. VI, 4.

[2] II Cor. 13:4; Acts 2:24-28; 3:15, 26; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33 f, 37; 17:31.

[3] Jn. 2:19; 10:18; Ignatius Smyrneans 2.

> The resurrection was proof not of something that Jesus had been in his early life but of the sovereign place to which he had since attained.[1]

He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."[2] After God raised Jesus up, "him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."[3] By his resurrection God has ordained him to be the judge of the living and the dead.[4] The proof of this appointment is Jesus' resurrection by the power of God.[5] Jesus was of such a character that God raised him up because it was impossible that he should be held by death.[6]

The resurrection of Jesus was at the very heart of practically every tenet of the church. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain (void), your faith also is vain."[7] All who believe on the risen Christ shall receive the remission of their sins.[8] The resurrection of Christ "rescued man from destruction." It changed man's mortality.[9] It abolished death, and reveals the resurrection from the dead.[10] Eternal life is guaranteed by it.[11]

The Christian position on the resurrection of the dead was that it was proved by Jesus' resurrection.[12] In their discussions with Jews, more and more they insisted that the resurrection of the dead could not be proved from the Old Testament, even though some Christians used the Old Testament to prove that the Messiah must rise. It could be established only by the resurrection of Jesus, which event has brought life and immortality to light. The Pharisees insisted, however, that the ancient scriptures did teach that all men would rise from the dead, claiming to establish it not only from the Prophets, but from Torah and the Writings as well.[13] Anyone who denies that immortality

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[1] E. F. Scott, op. cit., p. 18. [2] Rom. 1:4.

[3] Acts 5:31. [4] Acts 10:42. [5] Acts 17:31.

[6] Acts 2:24. [7] I Cor. 15:14. [8] Acts 10:43.

[9] Clement of Alexandria Exhortation to the Heathen 11.

[10] Barnabas 5. [11] I Peter 1:3. [12] I Cor.15:20-24;Jn.14:19.

[13] Sanh. 90b.

is taught in the scripture is a Min.[1] But the Jews who argued thus could produce only a few very dubious and far-fetched passages.[2] Tertullian, on the other hand, insisted that the resurrection of the flesh could be proved from the Old Testament. He found nine passages to that effect.[3]

As we have seen earlier, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, for they insisted Moses did not teach it, and therefore it was an innovation. But the Pharisees and undoubtedly the vast majority of the common people believed in it.[4] How central this doctrine was in Pharisaism we do not know. It does not appear to have been the chief tenet of the group in the first century; observance of the whole of Torah was that. But in the second century it became important enough to exclude from the future life all who did not believe it was taught in the Pentateuch.[5]

The emphasis placed on the reality and truth of Jesus' resurrection in the first three centuries pretty well establishes that there was much hostility to the idea, especially among the unbelieving Jews. "It will be readily perceived that the earliest stories about Jesus' resurrection were not mere unadorned and unintellectualized recitals of simple facts; they were stories which contained considerable explanation."[6] Justin's work On the Resurrection shows that gentiles were concerned not with the idea of a resurrection, for Plato and Pythagoras taught an immortality, but with the notion of the resurrection of the body in which one had died. There is no hint in this book that gentiles objected to the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. Much later we find that the heathen admitted Jesus' resurrection, but attributed it to magic.[7] Many stories of the rising of slain divinities were in circulation among the gentiles, and so the preaching of Jesus'

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[1]Exodus Rabbah XLIV. 6, p. 73c, d.

[2]E.g., Ex. 6:4; Num. 18:28; Deut. 4:4; 11:9; 31:16; Isa. 26:19; Song of Songs 7:9.

[3]Tertullian On the Resurrection of the Flesh 27-31, using Ex. 4:2-9; Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6; Isa. 26:19; 58:8; 66:14, 22-24; Ezek. 37:1-14; Mal. 4:2 f.

[4]Sotah IX, 15; Sanh. X, 1. [5]Sanh. X, 1.

[6]D. W. Riddle, op. cit., pp. 7 f.

[7]Arnobius Against the Heathen i. 43; Acts of S. Pionius 3 (in J. Bollandius and G. Henschenius, Acta Sanctorum [Paris: Victor Palmé, 1863-], February, I, 45).

resurrection to people with such a background hardly required extensive proof and justification.

When we turn to the second century Christian literature we find the Jews active in trying to beat down the claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. According to Justin, Jews from Jerusalem were sent out in deputations to the Jewish colonies within the gentile world with the warning that a deadly heresy had arisen among the Jews of Palestine, who among other things fraudulently claimed that Jesus had risen from the dead, his body having been stolen from its burial place.[1] Origen preserves the objections to the resurrection made by Celsus' Jew. He asserts that no one who was actually dead ever rose again with a real body.[2] He asks, "How could a dead man be immortal?"[3] He admits that the Jews believe in a bodily resurrection, and that the example and archetype of this will be "he who is sent to us," but "where is he [Jesus], that we may see him and believe on him?"[4] If Jesus really had risen from the dead, he would have appeared to those who ill-treated him, and to all men universally.[5] Now being a god, he would have no one to fear by so doing.[6] His remaining hid, however, cannot be defended, for he had been publicly proclaimed as the Son of God at his baptism, and had been sent for a public career to win men to himself, so the Christians say.[7] Accordingly, this Jew concludes that "someone having so dreamed owing to a peculiar state of mind, or having, under the influence of a perverted imagination, formed such an appearance as he himself desired, reported that such had been seen; and this has been the case with numberless individuals."[8] "While undergoing his punishment he was seen by all men, but after his resurrection by one, whereas the opposite ought to have happened."[9] This one was "a half-frantic woman," Mary Magdalene, and some of his companions, perhaps, "who had either dreamed so, owing to a peculiar state of mind, or under the influence of a wandering imagination had formed....an appearance according to his own wishes," in order to deceive people.[10] If Jesus really rose from the dead physically,

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[1] Justin Dial. 108. [2] Origen Cels. ii.57. [3] Ibid., ii.16.

[4] Ibid., ii. 77. [5] Ibid., ii. 63, 67.

[6] Ibid., ii. 67. [7] Ibid., ii. 72. Cf. ii. 30.

[8] Ibid., ii. 60. [9] Ibid., ii. 70. [10] Ibid., ii.55,59,70.

why do the Christians take this to be true while rejecting the myths about others who rose from the dead?[1] Others who have claimed to have risen from the dead did it by juggling tricks, "in order to deceive their simple hearers, and make gain by their deception." Some of them were Zamolxis in Scythia, the slave of Pythagoras, Pythagoras himself, Rhampsinitus in Egypt, Orpheus among the Odrysians, Protesilaus in Thessaly, Hercules at Cape Taenarus, and Theseus.[2]

Were such denials of Jesus' resurrection also circulating among the Jews of the first century? We have every reason to suppose that they were. The New Testament is so insistent on establishing the resurrection by appeal to ancient Jewish scripture[3] that we can only conclude that every effort had to be put forward to persuade the Jews. The most primitive formulation of the Christian faith known to us says, "he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures."[4] In the synoptics Ps. 118:22 f is quoted in support of Jesus' resurrection.[5] Luke offers other instances in which Jesus speaks of his resurrection as in consonance with Old Testament prophecies.[6] Many times Jesus is quoted predicting his resurrection, although not always with the specific statement that such is the fulfillment of prophecy.[7] Moreover, a type of Jesus' resurrection is found in the story of Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the whale.[8] In the Fourth Gospel, too, Jesus predicts his resurrection.[9] It took place according to scripture.[10]

If the Jews said that the church arrived at its belief in Jesus' resurrection only by a process of violent misinterpretations of scripture, and with no other proof, John furnishes an answer. The other disciple and possibly also Peter came to a belief in the resurrection of Jesus not through scripture, "for

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[1] Ibid., ii. 55, 58. [2] Ibid., ii. 55.

[3] Acts 2:24-28 quotes Ps. 16:8-10; Acts 13:33-37 quotes Ps. 2:7, Isa. 55:3, and Ps. 16:10.

[4] I Cor. 15:4. [5] Mk. 12:10 f; Mt. 21:42 f; Lk. 20:17.

[6] Lk. 18:31, 33; 24:25-27, 44-46.

[7] Mk. 8:31 f; Mt. 16:21; Lk. 9:22; Mk. 9:31 f; Mt. 17:23; Lk. 9:44 f; Mk. 10:34; Mt. 20:20; Mk. 16:7; Lk. 24:6 f.

[8] Mt. 12:40; Lk.11:30.

[9] Jn. 2:19-22; 3:14; 8:28; 10:17 f; 11:25; 17:13; 20:9, etc.

[10] Jn. 20:9.

as yet they knew not the scripture," but through first-hand observation of the empty tomb and the position of the grave-clothes.[1]

In the primitive period belief in the resurrection rested not alone on scriptural proof-passages that the Messiah must rise, but also on personal resurrection experiences. The primitive formulation handed down to Paul says, "He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once....then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles." Paul adds to this his own experience: "and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also."[2] Thus from the first decades it was claimed that not one, or two, or only a few saw Jesus, but that the number ran into the hundreds.

Luke-Acts, Matthew, and John greatly expand Mark's treatment of the resurrection. We read that Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs" over a period of forty days.[3] "He was seen for many days by them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem."[4] This was no spirit that they saw. "When they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit, he said, See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having."[5] Moreover, he asked for something to eat, and ate a broiled fish in the presence of the disciples.[6] If Jesus had been a bodiless spirit, the women who returned from the tomb could not have clasped his feet.[7] John, too, proves that Jesus was not a hallucination by reporting his invitation to the disbelieving Thomas to touch him.[8] This same interest was in the Gospel According to the Hebrews: "Lo, feel me and see that I am not a bodiless spirit (demon). And forthwith they touched him, and believed."[9] The appendix to the Fourth Gospel states that the appearance there recorded was "now the third time that Jesus was manifested to his disciples," to put to rest any claim that Jesus appeared only once to them, which might then

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[1]Jn. 20:1-9. [2]I Cor. 15:5-8. [3]Acts 1:3.

[4]Acts 13:31. [5]Lk. 24:37, 39. [6]Lk. 24:41-43.

[7]Mt. 28:9. [8]Jn. 20:24-29.

[9]Gospel According to the Hebrews, fragment preserved in Jerome's Lives of Illustrious Men 16. Cf. Ignatius Smyrneans 3:1.

be interpreted as a temporary hallucination on their part.[1]

The malignant charge of the Jews that Jesus' body had been stolen, which was present in the second century,[2] is expressly said to have been in circulation in the first century as well. Matthew preserves this item. He tells how the Jewish authorities went to Pilate with their fears that the disciples might come and steal his body, in view of Jesus' prophecies of his resurrection, and then tell the people that he had risen from the dead. Pilate gave them a guard, who made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone.[3] After his resurrection, which had filled the guard with mortal terror, they went to the Jewish authorities about it, who bribed them to say that the disciples had come and stolen the body while they were asleep. "So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day."[4] Here it is expressly said that the rumor of the stolen body was a Jewish falsified version of what had happened, in an attempt to conceal the truth. It is also said that this false rumor appeared at once after the resurrection, and had a continuous circulation down to the day when the gospel of Matthew was written some fifty years later. How Jesus could get out of the sealed tomb is accounted for by Matthew. He says a great earthquake took place. But the earthquake did not move the stone; this was done by an angel who descended from heaven and rolled back the stone.[5]

The Jewish contention that Jesus' body had been stolen by his disciples was a particularly tenacious one. It is mentioned not only by Justin in the second century, as we have said, but seems to have been part of the now fragmentary Gospel of Peter, whose date is about 150 A.D. "They plastered thereon seven seals; and they pitched a tent there and kept watch."[6] The elders were also present keeping watch.[7] Very likely it was also in the now fragmentary Gospel According to the Hebrews, also of early date. The armed men kept the cave day and night.[8] Another fragment

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[1]Jn. 21:14. [2]Justin Dial. 108. [3]Mt. 27:62-66.

[4]Mt. 28:11-15. [5]Mt. 28:2.

[6]Gospel of Peter 29-33, Harnack's numbering. [7]Ibid.,38.

[8]Gospel According to the Hebrews (James, Apocr. N.T., p. 7).

says, "The Lord, when he had given the linen cloth unto the servant of the priest, went unto James."[1] This presentation of the shroud to the high priest's servant must have been told to show that the high priest was thereby acquainted with the real facts in the matter, and so was entirely without excuse when he spread the lie that Jesus' body had been stolen. Other references to this old Jewish charge are found in post second-century literature.[2]

In order to overcome the doubts of both Jews and gentiles as to Jesus' resurrection, the witness of but one or two, like Mary Magdalene, was not depended upon. Evidently Mark had not thought it necessary to record any actual appearances. The church later realized this deficiency, and attached various endings to the second gospel. Matthew records the appearances to the women and to the eleven.[3] Luke-Acts relates the experience of the two men on the road to Emmaus,[4] the appearance to Simon Peter,[5] to the eleven,[6] and the appearance at Bethany when he led them out before his ascension.[7] He also mentions that Jesus appeared to them during the space of forty days.[8] John adds the experience of Mary Magdalene,[9] repeats the Lukan story of the appearance to the eleven,[10] and adds another appearance to them a week later.[11] Luke-Acts goes to great length to bring out that the disciples were primarily witnesses--witnesses that the scriptural prophecies had been fulfilled. So they went out, now as apostles, bearing this witness to all the world.[12]

These were the means used by the early church to establish the resurrection of Jesus in the face of very strong hostility toward it, especially among the Jews. Matthew admits the difficulty

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[1]Gospel According to the Hebrews, fragment preserved in Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men 2.

[2]Gospel of Nicodemus 13; Tertullian Apology 21: On Shows 30; Clementine Recognitions i. 42; Eusebius Eccl. Hist. iv. 18; the Toledoth of the middle ages (cf. S. Krauss, "Jesus in Jewish Legend," Jew. Enc. VII, 172.

[3]Mt. 28:8-10, 16-20. [4]Lk. 24:13-32. [5]Lk. 24:34.

[6]Lk. 24:36-49. [7]Lk. 24:50 f; Acts 1:6-9.

[8]Acts 1:3. [9]Jn. 20:11-18. [10]Jn. 20:19-23.

[11]Jn. 20:26-29.

[12]Lk. 24:45-48; Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:40 f: 13:31: 22:15: 23:11: 26:16. Cf. Jn. 15:26 f: I Jn. 1:2: 5:9; I Peter 5:1.

of persuading first century Jews to accept the resurrection, for he tells us that even some of the disciples themselves did not believe in the appearances: "When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted."[1]

Increasingly the Jews raised the question: if Jesus rose from the dead where is he? For the Messiah is to abide forever. We have already seen that Celsus' Jew voiced this protest.[2] Mark gives no answer to that question. Matthew and Luke might be doing so by quoting Jesus to the effect that only when they have accepted him as the Messiah will he be made manifest to them: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."[3] John also seems to be dealing with this Jewish objection that Jesus was not universally seen after his death by implying that Jesus chose to manifest himself after his resurrection only to his own, and not the world.[4]

Among the four gospels only Luke-Acts adopts the ascension to account for Jesus' removal from human sight after his resurrection. After a brief forty days "he was parted from them (some manuscripts add, and was carried up into heaven)."[5] "He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."[6] The longer ending attached to Mark also says that Jesus "was received up into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God."[7] The church repeatedly emphasized that Jesus was in heaven.[8] In the second century, if not in the first, this led supposedly Jewish critics to compare the fable to the ascension of Hercules with the story of Jesus' ascension.[9] And yet the Apocalypse of Baruch definitely taught an ascension of the Messiah after his work on earth: "And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that he shall return in glory."[10] This passage comes from a section written be-

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[1]Mt. 28:17. [2]Origen Cels. 11, 30, 63, 67, 72, 77.

[3]Mt. 23:38 f; Lk. 13:35. [4]Jn. 14:22 f.

[5]Lk. 24:51. [6]Acts 1:9. [7]Mk. 16:19.

[8]Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Acts 3:20 f; 7:55 f; I Peter 3:22.

[9]Justin Dial. 69. [10]Apoc. of Baruch 30:1.

fore 70 A.D.[1] But there is no evidence at hand that late first century Christian writers knew or felt the seriousness of an attempt to treat the ascension and session at the right hand of God as a fable.

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[1]Charles, Apocr. and Pseud. II, 475.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing investigation of the ancient invective against Jesus has brought out a number of significant results. It has shown that the sources all point to the fact that gentiles before 150 were much less interested in the purely historical life of Jesus than the Jews were. If Jesus had religious significance to a one-time pagan, it was on the basis of mystical communion with a divine redeemer God who had suffered vicariously for the sins of his devotees, and after his death had been exalted to a sublime position in the universe as the Saviour and future Judge of all men. Jesus was Kurios Christos, a super-historical figure, worthy of all religious honors, and ever-present in a spiritual way. His sufferings at the hands of the Jews offered no real difficulty for two reasons: (1) the idea of a suffering and dying redeemer god was thoroughly entrenched in Graeco-Roman religious thought of the first and second centuries; and (2) Jesus' death, supposedly at the hands of the Jews, of itself offered no offense, for from 70 A.D. on, if not earlier, the Jews had become a detested nation in the eyes of gentiles, capable of the most unreasonable and diabolical acts. To gentiles the rejection of Jesus by the Jews might have been regarded as a point in his favor, rather than an indication of his spiritual or moral unworthiness.

On the other hand, there was every reason for the Jews to pour invective upon the Jesus of history. Jesus had operated in their sacred country, and had been a compatriot of theirs. There were a dozen important reasons why the preaching of Jesus as the Christ--the Messiah of Jewish hope--threatened the very foundations of orthodox Judaism. The Christians' contention that they were the true Jews, and the enormous effort of the church to recast Judaism into its pattern constituted the greatest threat to Judaism since the effort of Antiochus Epiphanes to Hellenize Judaism in 186 B.C. All the intellectual and emotional reactions to Antiochus' effort were eventually whipped into flame against this new apostasy, risen from within Judaism's ranks. For some

time Jewish leaders could not foresee the result. They feared that all Judaism might be swept from its moorings by this new orientation which the church was trying to give it. Palestinian Judaism appears to have been in less danger than diaspora Judaism. The church was finding an alarming number of converts among not only the disapora, but the proselytes and God-fearers. Men like Paul, Timothy, Silas, and Barnabas were the ones who were feared far more than James the brother of Jesus, and other church leaders in Palestine. It was readily seen by the Jews that the best way to sabotage the church's Christology was to attack the historical life of Jesus. This it did in two ways: it showed that Jesus' ministry was far from messianic in character, and it attempted to show that Jesus himself was morally and spiritually far below the high ethical qualities which it went without saying must be part of the Messiah's spiritual equipment.

It appears from this study that during the actual life of Jesus the Jews had not taken enough interest in him to preserve independent traditions about him which could be used as ammunition against the church's subsequent propaganda. On the other hand, the church's preaching of Jesus as the Christ had to be met by using the church's own traditions of his life. We find that by far the majority of criticisms of Jesus which the Jews of the second century made could have been, and probably were, drawn from a hostile reading of Mark or the Markan sources. Hence Mark constitutes a special problem, for it not only appears to be the basis of most of the Jewish attacks against the life and character of Jesus, but it by all odds is the least interested of any of the gospels in defending the historical Jesus from scurrilous attacks. We may draw one of three conclusions: either (1) the gospel of Mark was the primary source for the Jewish attacks upon Jesus, hence it was composed before most of the negative judgments of Jesus were made by the Jews; or (2) it was composed by a gentile Christian far removed from the Jewish outcries against Jesus which arose from an adverse interpretation of Mark's sources, so that the author was unaware of what the Jews were saying about Jesus; or (3) it was composed by a gentile Christian who was writing to a gentile church, presumably Rome, where the church and synagogue had already become so widely and irrevocably split that Jewish counter-propaganda against the hero of the Christian faith constituted no problem in keeping the Christian membership there

loyal to their faith. While it is impossible to decide which of these three alternatives is the true one, the third appears to be the most likely. Though Mark records a number of slanders which he says were made against Jesus in his lifetime, it is not apparent that he consistently attempts to answer those charges. We can only interpret this as evidence that those criticisms were not current in his day or locale in sufficiently serious proportions for him to concern himself about portraying Jesus in a manner which rendered them preposterous.

When we observe how often Matthew and Luke, each working independently with Mark as one of their sources, alter Markan pericopes so that Jesus is presented to the reader in a more favorable light, we conclude that accusations similar to those which were afloat in the second century were made against the Jesus of Mark, or of his materials, which were known to the later synoptists. We have observed many times how Markan pericopes have been altered at crucial points by both Matthew and Luke, but independently of each other. And we have seen how a particular charge has affected some Markan pericopes in Matthew, and others in Luke, so that, while the changes do not always come at precisely the same points, independent reading of Matthew or of Luke-Acts, compared with the Markan delineation of Jesus, depicts him in a far more favorable light, and renders him much less vulnerable to the attacks which were possible on the basis of the Markan portrait. Radical changes are not often made, but slight and apparently insignificant alterations pile up in number and with such consistency that we may hardly avoid the conclusion that a clearly defined purpose was before the eyes of the later synoptists when they dealt with their Markan source. It might also be pointed out that almost all of the non-Markan materials which are found in Matthew and Luke are shaped in a manner, and deal with subjects, which made it virtually impossible for the critic of Jesus to set his teeth in them and use them to bolster his case against Jesus as the Messiah. This is not true of the birth stories, however. The Jewish attacks upon them arose after their publication by Matthew and Luke, and the evidence is clear that no charge that Jesus was illegitimately born appeared in Jewish circles before Matthew and Luke-Acts were composed, at least to the knowledge of these writers.

The very significant handling of the Markan pericopes by

Matthew and Luke--who worked independently of each other, it must repeatedly be emphasized--establishes quite conclusively that the majority of the Jewish slanders against Jesus which we know were floating about in the second century, were also being used to the limits of their possibilities in the first century, in an effort to defeat the new sect by cutting the ground away from under it. The rapid appearance of the charge of bastardy against Jesus after the publication of Matthew and Luke-Acts indicates the methods of the Jews. As soon as a Christian gospel appeared, they scanned it carefully for loop-holes in the Christian case for the messiahship of Jesus, and by fair means or foul circulated negative judgments which they arrived at through their reading of the Christian materials for the life of Jesus.

The Fourth Gospel was composed at a time when the Jewish attacks against the Markan and the later synoptic portraits were causing increasing embarrassment to the church. It was also composed at a time when the church was faced with the very serious problem of the non-appearance of the confidently heralded Parousia. Hence the author met the needs of the hour in very effective fashion by completely recasting the synoptic portraits of Jesus' earthly life. He did not adopt the Matthean-Lukan expedient of making slight changes, omissions, or additions, but he completely altered the entire tradition of Jesus' life built up in the synoptics. He practically eliminated the Galilean ministry. He introduced frequent visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, the religious metropolis. He effaced the life of humiliation. He eliminated every trace of soul-struggle and human weakness. He consciously presented Jesus as the master of every situation, who fully foreknew every event, and who was all-powerful against every enemy if he chose to use that power. He brought the reputation of John the Baptist to a new low, allowing no subservience of Jesus to the Baptist for a moment. He introduced the Logos idea, thus waving aside the Markan adoptionist delineation and the Matthean-Lukan divine birth explanation of Jesus' deity. Jesus was God from all eternity, having come to earth. Hence, John portrayed Jesus' earthly life as the great Parousia, and relegated to the distant background the doctrine of a future Parousia to complete the work of Jesus or the plan of God. At the moment of his death Jesus could say, "It is finished." The functions and work of Jesus the Messiah were concluded on the cross. No future

coming was necessary to complete a work which had been but announced, or begun, during his earthly life. The coming of Jesus in the future was limited to the very simple function of receiving to himself in eternal glory all who had come to believe in him and accepted his completed work of redemption which had been wrought during his earthly life.

It is not suggested that the gospels were written as a reply to attacks on the historical Jesus. Certainly Mark was not. But among the motives which impelled the authors of Matthew and Luke-Acts to reject Mark and compose gospels of their own was their desire to portray Jesus in a manner which more effectively protected Jesus' messiahship from Jewish attacks upon it. John, as Matthew and Luke had done earlier, rejected the gospels of his day as unsuitable, and among other reasons composed his gospel in a manner which elevated Jesus above current attacks upon his messiahship and divinity.

At the beginning Christianity was a sectarian movement within Judaism, and its chief interest was the persuasion of all Jewry, Palestinian and Diaspora, that Jesus was the Messiah who soon was to reappear with power and great glory, bringing to destruction the present age and unjust world-order, and ushering in the Kingdom of God with uncounted blessings. The primitive group of Believers preached their message to the Jews with great confidence, hardly anticipating the obstinate refusal of the vast majority of Jews to accept their views. Some of Paul's letters show the poignant soul-struggle of the church over the refusal of the majority of God's chosen people to believe. This Jewish attitude had more to do with Christianity's becoming a gentile movement than any other. But even before the church had exhausted its field among the Jews, proselytes, and God-fearers, it turned also to the pagans. This feature of its work hastened its extinction as a Jewish sect and forced it out of Judaism to become a rival religion. The Jews contended furiously against the church everywhere, seeking to recapture their own people and their proselytes and God-fearers for orthodoxy. The Jewish leaders used every means they could to discredit the new "apostasy," as they regarded it. They attacked the Christian missionaries' motives, as we see from reading Paul's letters. They slipped into the churches and "Judaized," as Galatians shows. And above all, they sought to discredit Jesus as a religious figure by a concerted

attack upon his historical life, character, and work. They used every means they could to demonstrate that Jesus bore no marks of messiahship in his own person, and fulfilled no predictions of the glorious deeds that the prophets and popular imagination envisaged when the Messiah should come.

Such was the situation when the gospels were being written. The church was still desperately trying to convert the Jews, especially among the diaspora, for it was inconceivable that the Messiah should be all but universally rejected by God's chosen people. Not until John was written was the church ready to abandon its mission to the Jews, and consign them to the judgment of the Almighty. And in this period from 70 to 100 the church was hard pressed to hold its converts. The Jewish counter-propaganda had a devastating effect among the Jewish and proselyte members of the church. The Jewish slurs on the life of Jesus cast many doubts in the minds of Christians who had come up from paganism. The church's leadership could not blindly ignore this great challenge. It threatened the church's continuance. Hence the gospel writers after Mark made their contributions to the church's most vital need of a portrayal of Jesus which could withstand the slanders of the Jews and of anyone else who took them up by so shaping their materials from earlier materials and gospels in a way that rendered innocuous the Jewish attacks, and satisfied the Christians who had begun to waver in their loyalty to Jesus Christ. Moreover, the gospels were so shaped that the life of Jesus could be presented to the as yet unconverted pagan in such a way as to overcome the Jewish prejudices against the church and its redeemer God which had been planted in the minds of many pagans whom the church was trying to convert.

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